



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

3 3433 06142467 1

649
FROM THE LIBRARY OF MAJOR JOHN LE CONTE.

DEPOSITED

In the Library of the American Philosophical Society, May 20, 1864, by

DR. J. L. LE CONTE,

1325 SPRUCE STREET, PHILADELPHIA,

Until Reclaimed.

*: AC
Paw

John De Conte

Philosophical Differtations

ON THE 16

EGYPTIANS and CHINESE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

1968

OF

MR. DE PAUW,

PRIVATE READER TO FREDERIC II. KING OF PRUSSIA,

BY CAPT. J. THOMSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CHAPMAN,

NO. 151, FLEET-STREET.

1795.

N.B.P.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

254075B

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

R

1948

L

CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

SECOND PART.

Sect. VI. STATE of Architecture among the Egyptians and Chinese	Page 1
--	--------

THIRD PART.

Sect. VII. On the Religion of the Egyptians	8
Sect. VIII. On the Religion of the Chinese	163
Sect. IX. On the Government of Egypt	229
Sect. X. On the Government of the Chinese	290

MAR 25 1943
 AUG 25 1943

ERRATA.

Page 107, line 26, *for Butter, read, Buttner.*

141, and in other places, *for Manethon, read, Manetho.*

171, and in other places, *for Lon, read, Lou.*

191, — 16, *for Tartan, read, Tartar.*

194, — 3, *for Zameints and Taxoras, read, Zamolxis and Toxaris.*

207, — 18, *for clock, read, bell.*

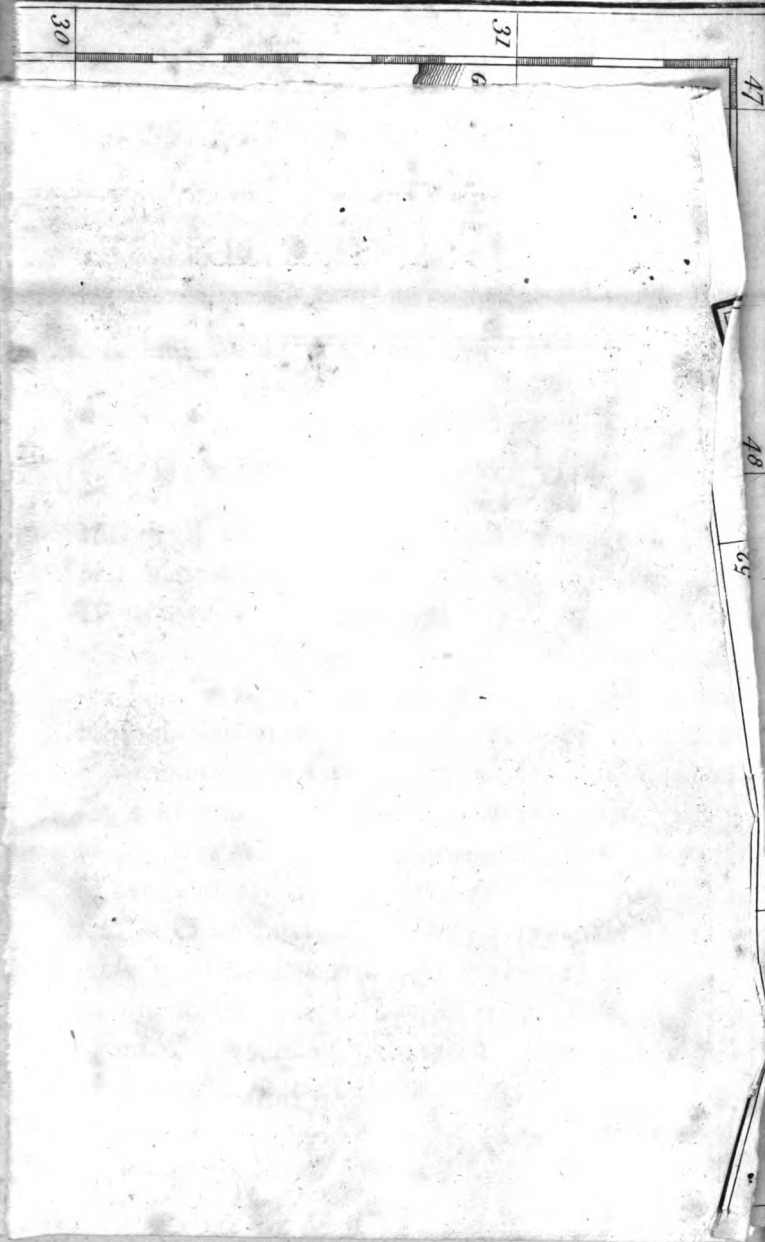
238, — 27, *for Nomandic, read, Nomadic.*

240, — 25, *for increales, read, decreases.*

251, — 14, *for fudres, read, feidres.*

264, — 3, *after Ptolemy, read, Evax king of Arabia, Juba, Dejotares, Hieron, Attalus.*

281, — 18, *for seduce, read, subdue.*



Philosophical Differtations

ON THE

EGYPTIANS AND CHINESE.

SECT. VI.

STATE OF ARCHITECTURE AMONG THOSE PEOPLE.

THE principal works erected by the Egyptians and Chinese are considered here for the sole purpose of displaying the essential difference of genius in the two nations. We do not therefore pretend to speak of the principles and rules of architecture; for, however this may be the duty of the artist, it is not the object of the philosopher.

After having examined some monuments in a general way, we propose to describe more particularly the Great Wall, by which Egypt was bounded to the east. That no person may be tempted to suspect a connexion between this rampart and that of China, we shall point out an astonishing number of others, on the surface of the ancient continent. Some of these were so very extensive, that, if placed together in a straight line, beginning at the first meridian, and following the direction of the equator, they

they would nearly have divided the whole of our hemisphere. It is very remarkable, that the inhabitants of so many regions, on three parts of our globe, have endeavoured to fortify themselves in this manner, chiefly against the Tartars and Arabs: but no appearances of any such works have ever been discovered in America.

Any Chinese at this day would be much astonished to see the obelisks of Alexandria, or the Matary, and still more those pyramids, ranged to the west of the Nile, from *Hauara* to *Gizeh*. So far from finding monuments of that kind in China, no person there ever heard them even mentioned. The emperor *Kien-long*, of the dynasty of *Daj-dzin*, who sat on the throne when this book was written, might perhaps have possessed some paintings less defective than those seen in that country until the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty: but not one of his houses exhibited a single fine column. The princes, who preceded him since *Yo*, if ever such a person existed, employed no other than wooden pillars, destitute of all fixed proportions, in their palaces, pagodas, and tombs.

Thus we find the characteristic of Chinese architecture to be diametrically opposite to that of the Egyptians, which tended to render indestructible, what in the former was not only fragile, but likewise very inflammable, from the varnish, as well as the mixture of lime, tow, and paper, with which they fill up the cavities of the wood, when any
are

are found on the pillars; or the exposed parts of the entablature. The town of *Nankin* having once caught fire, all attempts to extinguish it were useless. Not one house could be saved; and three days after the conflagration, the whole district did not discover even the ruins of a habitation. The town of Thebes, on the contrary, although sacked and set on fire so many times since *Cambyfes*, presents still considerable vestiges, of which some drawings and inscriptions have been given both by *Pococke* and *Norden*. It is believed that the great temple of Thebes may be expected to remain longer than any of the palaces erected in the present day; and the boasted cupola of Saint Peter's church in particular appears little calculated for durability.

Knowing the vanity of the Chinese, and their addiction to historical falsehood, we should reduce to its just value what they relate of those marvellous edifices, constructed by their first emperors. Some, like the pretended castle of the empress *Ta-kia*, never existed; and the fabulous description of that building has been invented by writers, who had no idea whatever of architecture. Such must we consider them, when they venture to affirm, that it was built of red marble inclining to a rose-colour; that the light entered there, as into one of the apartments in the golden house of *Nero*; that the doors were of jasper; and that the height of the castle was two thousand feet. Other boasted fabrics, like the tomb of *Schi-chuan-di*, were constructed

structed entirely of wood; and the reader may judge presently, what gross exaggerations have been published concerning that edifice, of which not even a ruin now remains.

It is impossible to reflect, without smiling, on the simplicity or folly of the Chinese, who point out in the province of *Chen-si* the sepulchre of *Fo-hi*. Father Du Halde observes seriously, that if this monument be really authentic, it is more ancient than all those on our continent*. But this piece of antiquity cannot be compared to the *Pike of Adam* in the island of Ceylon, where traces are pretended to be found of *Piromi* the first of mortals. Such puerile traditions, it is easy to conceive, can only be relished among unenlightened nations, where historical criticism being entirely unknown, the ignorant regale each other with fables. As the lettered there know that their country was peopled by colonies from the heights of Tartary, they have supposed the tomb of their founder *Fo-hi* to be situated nearly in the thirty-fifth degree of north latitude, and the hundred and twenty-second of longitude. This corresponds with the position of the town of *Kong-tchang*, in the province of *Chen-si*.

The Chinese never knew the method of erecting stone buildings of two or three stories; and they are not inclined even to attempt any thing of the kind with timber. Thus all the towns of that

* Description of China, vol. i.

country require three times more space than expediency would admit; especially as agriculture is in full force only in their neighbourhood. Mr. Le Poivre says, that in China the soil is spared even in constructing pleasure-houses; and the great roads, he adds, are nothing more than paths*: but surely it must be admitted, that this writer has been extravagantly enthusiastic with regard to the Chinese. The villa, erected by the emperor *Can-hi* merely through caprice, covered more surface than any of our third-rate towns; and every person knows, that the road leading to Peking is one hundred and twenty feet broad. In the southern provinces, where neither carriages nor any beasts of burden are employed, because every thing is conveyed by canals, the highways do not require to be very spacious; but we shall see presently, that the interior commerce of that country is not always carried on by water.

Some travellers have suggested, that the Chinese are led to prefer low houses through fear of earthquakes; yet such disasters are less frequent with them than in the Molucca Islands, and Japan, where they seem to be periodical. It is however very certain, that this precaution does not enable them to resist the slightest shocks; and whole towns are sometimes as completely destroyed, as if they were swept away by a whirlwind. This spectacle presented itself in the year one thousand seven hundred and nineteen at *Funny*, and some other neighbour-

* Voyage d'un Philosophe,

ing places, where not a single habitation was left standing *. In the reign of *Yong-schang*, father to the present emperor, upwards of forty thousand persons were crushed to death in Pekin, although inhabiting dwellings little better than huts. Houses might surely be constructed in such a manner as to suffer little from earthquakes; but of this the Chinese are altogether ignorant. They neither give solidity to the foundations, nor sufficient thickness to the walls, which besides are never held together by joists or braces; and therefore it is not astonishing, that they should be easily shattered to pieces. At one time, the steeple of Nankin tumbled down under the weight of its bell.

Architecture in China, like all the other arts, is reduced to practice, instead of rules. The trunk of a tree, called *Nan-mou*, and not the palm, has served there as the model for the columns; and although its species is not exactly known, it appears to belong to the class of larches, or firs. When the idea of the pillar was acquired, it might be supposed, that the proportions likewise would have been ascertained; and yet they were never reduced to fixed principles. Mr. Chambers, who measured some parts of a pagoda at *Canton*, says that the height of the pillars was equal to from eight to twelve times their diameter †; but this is not generally

* Bell of Antermony, vol. i.

† It is even possible that Mr. Chambers had taken the dimensions of a pagoda said to have been formerly a church belonging to

rally the case. They are in reality esteemed only for their great size, when consisting of one single piece; and this is considered as a species of luxury and magnificence. As trees with all the necessary qualities cannot easily be found, the private houses are supported by trunks, seldom exceeding thirteen or fourteen feet in height, from the root to that part where the diminution becomes very apparent. The *Nan-mou*, like firs in general, grows very lofty while young, and requires many years to attain much circumference. Thus the difficulty of procuring timber of such dimensions must have determined the Chinese to prefer this tree to all others. In a pagoda near *Nankin*, some are now seen upwards of five feet in diameter: but those of the new palace at *Pekin*, rebuilt since the fire in the reign of *Can-hi*, do not exceed two feet and a half.

It is surprising that the Chinese, with such ideas, should never have attempted to work in stone, especially as their whole country abounds with quarries. Their edifices, destitute of symmetry in the whole, or proportion among the component parts, are inferior even to those of the Persians and Turks. They extend the frieze enormously, for the sole purpose of displaying a profusion of ornaments, too whimsical to be described. Among the Egyptians, that part seems to have been destined chiefly to contain representations of the sacred

to the Jesuits. He was besides ignorant of a fact which shall be related hereafter.

animals. The Greeks therefore called it the Zoophorus, and we should have adopted that word, rather than the term *frieze*, which is altogether barbarous.

No particular place in the pagodas and palaces seems to have been allotted for the emblem of the dragon. It is seen every-where, even on the summit and angles of the roof, producing the most disagreeable effect possible. The passion of the Chinese is unaccountable in multiplying copies of this hideous monster, which resembles sometimes a lizard of Iguan, and frequently a winged toad, with the tail of an elephant. It might have been preserved on banners and liveries, as the principal piece of ancient arms; and this would only be conformable to the immutability of customs in the East. But the use made of it in architecture is not more reasonable than the invention of those French artists, who sculptured heads of cocks, and flower-de-luces, on chapters of the Corinthian order. A more frigid allusion could not possibly be made to the name and emblem of their nation.

The Chinese construct their edifices in such a manner, that the principal walls support nothing, while the top rests immediately on wooden pillars. This defective mode was never adopted, as some have believed, to prevent the progress of fire; and it has forced them to invent double roofs, extending one below the other; because a separate shed is necessary to protect the walls. Solidity is every-where

where neglected, and without it architecture has no real beauty. The houses, built along the river Canton, have indeed some works to raise them above the water; but in the interior provinces whole towns are erected without any foundation. In some of their towers, the first layer of bricks is not twenty-four inches below ground; and consequently, as Father Trigault says, they seldom remain standing during a single century*. We must however except the *Van-ly-czin*, or Great Wall, which was constructed by several kings totally independent of the Chinese emperors. Their interest led them to make that work capable of resisting the efforts of an enemy; otherwise the whole undertaking would have been absurd. Yet the parts, which do not rest on the solid rock, or are neglected for a short time, soon fall into ruins. The thickness of the pillars, used by the Chinese through mere ostentation, does not contribute to the solidity of the building; because their pedestals are not secured in the earth. The basis is nothing more than a square stone, laid on the surface of the ground, with a slight excavation to contain the lower end of the column; while the other is united, without any swelling, to what they may pretend to call the architrave. No chapter of any kind is ever employed by the Chinese; and this circumstance, as well as a thousand others, proves how much their manner of building differs

* *Ita raro unius seculi aetatem ferunt.* Exped. apud Sin. lib. 1.

from

from that of the Egyptians, whose imagination was greatly exercised in embellishing that part of their columns. They did not confine themselves entirely to the form described by Athenæus * ; for nine or ten different kinds have been discovered in the ruins of Thebais and the Delta. Finally, in a Chinese pagoda we see neither ranks of sphinxes, inclining walls, flat roofs, obelisks, crypts, subterraneous vaults, nor any thing resembling an Egyptian temple.

Many mistakes seem to have been propagated with regard to the model adopted for the first Egyptian houses ; but the Chinese evidently imitated the form of their tents. From all that we can learn of their primitive state, they were originally Nomades, or Scenites, like all the Tartars ; and consequently encamped with their flocks, previous to their settlement in towns. This, without doubt, gave rise to the singular construction of their present dwellings, where the roofs remain after the walls are thrown down, because they have no connexion with the timber-work. An inclosure of masonry had been made in this manner round the tents, to contain the cattle ; and such was certainly the first step, leading from a pastoral and wandering life towards fixed habitations. Nothing in fact can have more resemblance to an encampment than a Chinese town, which, at some distance, is mostly concealed by the ramparts, be-

* Lib. v, cap. 6,

cause the houses are all of one single story. Thus Mr. Bougainville, when speaking of an establishment near Batavia, calls it the *Chinese Camp* *.

An historian, or rather a fabulist of China, called the *Lo-pi*, says that the first habitations of his country resembled the nests of birds. But this is an Oriental figure, and must not consequently be understood in a literal sense. It is not probable, that the Chinese ever lived among the boughs of trees, like those savages of South America, who through stupidity and laziness did not clear the course of the rivers, which in summer overflowed their banks between the tropics. Thus their only refuge for a part of the year was on the tops of trees, devouring, like monkeys and marmosets, the fruit they found on the branches. By nests of birds, the *Lo-pi* probably intended to signify low round tents, made like bee-hives, and used by the Tartars, who frequent Chamo and other sandy deserts. It would be impossible there to use wooden pins for pitching tents, like those now employed by the Chinese soldiers, which are almost exactly similar to those of our own armies †.

It is difficult indeed to conceive, how the Abbé Barthelemy could affirm, that the edifices on the celebrated Palestrina Mosaic resembled Chinese houses. That learned man must have experienced singular illusions in examining that monument;

* Voyage round the World, vol. ii.

† Military Art of the Chinese.

and one example will be sufficient to give an idea of all the rest. He assures us that, in the barks on the Nile, some persons are seen with round and pointed bonnets, like those worn in China at this day; and thence he concludes, that the Chinese were originally Egyptians *. But how could he not have perceived that this dress was not used in China before the year one thousand six hundred and forty-four? It is really the Tartar hat, with which the people were forced to cover themselves, when they received orders from their conquerors to cut off their long hair. Thus the pretended resemblances, imagined without reflection or researches, between the Egyptians and Chinese, vanish like chimeras. We have seen nearly all the engraved copies extant of the Palestrina Mosaic; and particularly that inserted by the Abbé Barthelemy himself in the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions*. Yet in none of these does it appear, that the barks used on the Nile, so much talked of by this author, have any more conformity with the boats of China than with the gondolas of Venice. The vessels of all nations, from the canoes of the Hurons to the galleys of the Mediterranean, seem to have had nearly the same primitive form; and we are justified in asserting, that such circumstances cannot ascertain the history of a

* Explanation of the Palestrina Mosaic.—The ancient Egyptians cut off their hair: the Chinese, on the contrary, discovered the greatest obstinacy in preserving it, as we have seen on the conquest of the Tartars.

colony sent from Africa to the extremity of Asia.

Although the Chinese are long acquainted with the art of making arches, they have seldom practised it in the construction of their bridges. That in the province of *Jun-nan* consists of nothing more than piles, placed at certain distances, and joined by iron chains, along which the traveller passes with terror. Men of any dexterity would surely never have executed a work of that nature. Independently of all other inconveniencies and dangers, the rust, occasioned by fogs from the river, must affect the metal, and make it liable to give way when least expected. Father Parenin, in his letter, places this pretended iron bridge in competition with all the great edifices of Egypt; and such partiality in favor of the Chinese is so remarkable among all the writers of his order, that we read their accounts with continual diffidence. Many other bridges are seen in China, where, instead of arches, flat stones are placed on posts, erected at small distances. The great number of these supports has been considered by ignorant travellers as highly ornamental; but the precaution is absolutely necessary; otherwise the cross stones, whatever might be their thickness, would soon break in the middle.

With regard to the famous flying bridge, so much celebrated in Europe, and so often represented by engravings, we are under the necessity of declaring, that nothing, such as it is described,
I
ever

ever existed. The author of the Continuation of Rollin's History seems to insinuate, that Father Kircher took the liberty of inventing this flying bridge, in a work published at Amsterdam, under the title of *China illustrated*. This Father Kircher, who is accused of so many things, had certainly very strange visions, and much effrontery in publishing them; but here we must do him the justice to observe, that he only spoke, after the *Atlas* of Martini, as did also the anonymous compiler of the Wonders of Art and Nature*. The inventor of the flying bridge, however, wanted common sense; and it is not extraordinary that an able French architect, named Boffrand, after examining the dimensions, declared them to be chimerical in all their points. It is easy indeed to perceive at once, that no such bridge could be erected by means of the Roman arch, or even of the Gothic, which is commonly employed in China. What has given rise among Europeans to so many absurd fables, but too grateful to the vanity of the Chinese, is in reality the production of a torrent. It opened a passage under rocks, which were probably supported by a layer of earth, and in that manner produced a phenomenon not unexampled among the Alps. All the bridges constructed by the Chinese are exceedingly whimsical; and even when composed of arches, they want strength, as Father Du Halde observes, to support loaded carriages: but as they form a very acute angle at the summit, no danger

* *Artificia Hominum et Miranda Naturæ in Sina.*

is to be apprehended from any thing of that kind ; for even travellers have to pass them by stairs. When the Chinese are asked why so much elevation is given to the centre arch ; they say it must be so, in order that the barks may pass without interruption. Instead of incurring so much danger, it would surely be better to make the vessels lower their masts, which is no difficult operation on small rivers.

An observation of the utmost consequence, and sufficient to undeceive us for ever with regard to what the Chinese historians relate of the flourishing state of their country under the ancient emperors, concerns the *Tu-ho* or Royal Canal. That work, truly worthy of admiration, has been executed by very skilful artists, who understood levelling perfectly ; and the mechanism of the locks they constructed is as simple as the effect is astonishing. Almost the whole interior commerce of the country is carried on by this navigation, which opens a communication with the southern provinces and those of *Pe-tcheli* and *Kian-nan*, without any of the dangers attending sea voyages. Thus it is impossible that, previous to its being opened, the inland trade could ever have had great activity. Readers, who possess any share of penetration, will easily conceive what should be inferred here, and therefore we shall not insist further on this point. But it must not be imagined, that the Royal Canal was made by the Chinese ; for their architects were incapable of undertaking any thing of the kind. That
astonishing

astounding bed, by which the rivers flow into the lakes, and the lakes into the rivers, without their being liable either to dry up or overflow, was dug by the Mogul Tartars. It extends for more than six hundred leagues; and affords a navigation from one extremity of the empire to the other.

The conqueror *Koublai*, whose name can never perish, was a well-informed prince, and a lover of the arts. He invited into China many learned Persians, Arabs, and Lamas, particularly astronomers, geographers, and architects. The first were employed in composing almanacs; the second made observations as far north as the fifty-fifth degree, and south to the sixteenth, taking the altitude of different parts of China, Corea, Tartary, and Tonquin: the third class began to make the great canal, about the year one thousand two hundred and eighty of our era; and since that epoch, the appearance of China has changed entirely. The sea formerly swallowed up three-fourths of the vessels which attempted to pass *Li-ampo*, in their passage into the gulph of *Nankin*. At length the Moguls, shocked at so many shipwrecks, took compassion on the Chinese, who navigated so badly on the ocean, and had not sufficient industry to open a way across the continent. Not a single vessel is now lost in passing the locks, and they continue to be kept in perfect repair by the vigilance of the *Mandhui* Tartars. Had these conquerors not appeared, it is probable that the Chinese would have suffered this work, already much decayed in one thousand

thousand six hundred and forty, to fall entirely into ruins; and then the country must have been reduced to its former miserable state.

All the trenches for watering the fields, and the numerous cross canals which communicate with the *Tu-ho*, were likewise formed by the care of *Koublai-Kan*; who besides opened all southern China to foreign traders. It was in his reign that ships were seen there for the first time from Malabar, Sumatra, and Ceylon. By these means the provinces began to breathe, after having been exhausted by the rapaciousness of the Chinese officers, who required as many contributions in their own country, as if they had entered there as conquerors; and, pillaged in turn by victorious enemies, they were lost to every sense of shame or honor. *Koublai*, to prevent such disorders, augmented the pay of the army, which under the ancient government had been badly maintained, and did not indeed deserve better treatment. After such facts, the Chinese must be considered as guilty of the basest ingratitude, when they endeavour to blacken the memory of that prince. They blame him for having confided in men from the west, although these were the geographers and architects employed in constructing works, which would do honor to the greatest monarchs. He was reproached besides with loving women, and being attached to the Dalai-Lama. Yet all the emperors of China, prior to his arrival, had seraglios containing three or four hundred concubines, guarded by twelve or thir-

teen thousand eunuchs. The Dalai-Lama was the legitimate pontiff of the religion professed by *Koublai-Kan*; and in the midst of his glory, and through a long course of prosperity, he never forgot that the conqueror and the humblest slave were equally in the hands of the Omnipotent. But although firmly devoted to the worship of his ancestors, he never persecuted the conquered for any of their silly opinions; and his conduct in this point was very different from that of Alexander. The Persian Magi were continually tormented by the Macedonian, and they could not entirely preserve the sacred books of *Zend* from his fanaticism.

The Arabs, who travelled in China in the eighth century, found that country subjected to eunuchs, and peopled in some places by anthropophagi*. Various conjectures have been made on this report; and many tend to dispute its authenticity. Yet the government of that class of men is an undoubted fact; and the appearance of China has certainly undergone a great change since that period. The revolution in commerce and agriculture did not take place until the reign of *Koublai-Kan*, the founder of the twentieth dynasty. Then, likewise, whatever Father Goubil may say to the contrary, astronomy was first introduced there: but the knowledge, brought thither by the Arabs, Persians, and learned men of Balk and Samarcand who followed the Moguls, was lost a second time

* Ancient Relation of India and China, published by the Abbé Renaudot.

at the extinction of the twentieth dynasty. Of this we have a proof in an edict of the first Mandhui emperor, published in one thousand six hundred and fifty: it sets forth, that ever since the expulsion of the Moguls, the Chinese were incapable of making an exact almanac; that their errors, augmenting every year, became a disgrace to the conquerors, as well as to the people of the country; and therefore it was necessary to abandon the pretended tribunal of mathematics to Europeans. They are still in possession of that office; and in case of their being removed, the first calendar composed by the Chinese would be grossly erroneous; for as long as they preserve their language and manner of writing, it is impossible for them to make much progress in any of the sciences. Some historians wish to persuade us that observatories are now seen in China, which were built three thousand years ago, although no monument, we may aver, in that country can reasonably be supposed to approach so great antiquity. The only building of the kind, known to us, is at Peking, and that town was founded by *Koublai-Kan* in the year one thousand two hundred and sixty-seven*. The observatory must therefore have been erected posterior to the conquest of the Mogul Tartars, who, as we have observed, changed the face of the whole empire. With regard to some instruments, discovered on a mountain near Nankin, they were cer-

* The part of Peking called the *Chinese Town* was not built until the year 1644.

tainly made in the year one thousand three hundred and forty-nine.

The following observation must appear decisive on this point: the latitude of Pekin is 39 degrees, 55 minutes, and 15 seconds, which is rather more than in the map of D'Anville; that of Nankin is 32 degrees, 4 minutes, and 3 seconds. Yet the dials and other instruments, employed at those two places, were made to answer somewhat beyond the thirty-sixth degree, and consequently all the observations taken by the Chinese were erroneous.

Having reflected on this singularity, which no person had ever explained, it appeared to me at last, that the instruments used by the Chinese must have been copied from those adapted to the schools of *Balk*. That town is situated about thirty minutes beyond the thirty-sixth degree *, in the ancient *Bactriana*, where the sciences began to be cultivated by the Greeks, who having obtained the government of that country under the successors of Alexander, rendered themselves independent, and formed an empire extending as far as India †.

Instruments, calculated for the latitude of *Balk*, must therefore have been brought to China in the time of the Moguls; and such is the origin of the most absurd error ever adopted in any country. At

* In D'Anville's great map of Asia, *Balk* is somewhat more to the north: but an Arab named *Eben-Said* has placed it in 35 degrés and 54 minutes.

† Bayer, *Historia Regni Græcorum Bactriani*; and a memoir of Mr. de Guignes.

the

the arrival of the Jesuits, the Chinese maintained that all the towns of China were situated in the thirty-sixth degree. This is acknowledged even by Father Kircher, who adds, that they had no idea whatever of longitude *. Thus they must be allowed to have been as ignorant of the history of the earth, which they supposed to be square, as of the sky, where they believed the planets to be equally elevated with the stars.

It must be confessed that the Romans, for some time, did really use a solar dial, formed for the latitude of Catania, without perceiving their error. Rome however had not then been built more than three hundred and four years; and that term is very insufficient for any nation to acquire even the first principles of astronomy. But when the Chinese fell into such absurdities, they had already existed as a nation, according to their authentic annals, during more than three thousand years.

As to the observatory of the province of *Ho-nan*, it deserves to be placed, with the fabulous palace of the empress *Ta-kia*, among the edifices which never existed. Father Martini is the only person who asserts that the town of *Teng-feng-hien* contains a prodigious rule of brass, placed perpendicularly on a plate of the same metal; and he then proceeds to speak of a tower, built near three thousand years ago, where the pretended Chinese astronomer *Tcheou-Kong* observed the movements of the heavenly bodies. This huge rule and plate of brass have

* China Illustrata, p. 102. in folio.

been changed by Father du Halde into a simple instrument, and Mr. Boysen, when speaking of the town of *Teng-fong-bien*, mentions nothing more than the tower. Thus we find the observatory disappears entirely, except a few heaps of stones, which are supposed to have belonged to something of the kind: but if the learned of Europe had an opportunity of visiting the spot, they might be at a loss to find those ruins, as well as the extraordinary things introduced by Father Martini to embellish his book. The whole work, indeed, is so shamefully incorrect, that it might with more propriety be called a collection of common reports than an *Atlas*.

If China contained any monuments of great antiquity, we might expect to find them among the tombs of the emperors. But being all formed of wood, they have disappeared entirely, either from the effects of time, humidity, or fire. It is customary to have them surrounded with thick forests of cypresses, or those firs called by Mr. Osbeck *abies Sinensis*, which are devoted to the flames by the people, whenever they become discontented with the reigning dynasty. Besides, when the robbers grow powerful, and spread themselves over the cantons, where any imperial tombs are found, they pillage them so completely, that even the roofs are not left standing. The history of China frequently mentions such disasters, which cannot be avoided, because the *Miao*, if formed in the midst of towns, would soon transform them into burying-grounds. The princes, the governors, and the great mandarines,

ines, must have their places of sepulture shaded with trees, planted in quincunx to a very great distance, and much soil fit for culture has been wasted, to gratify this obstinacy.

An Egyptian law, preserved by Plato, declares that no person should be buried on any spot capable of producing a tree. We know to a certainty, that the Pharaohs, even to the dynasty of the Saitæ, conformed themselves to this wise regulation; for not even a shrub could be planted either in the environs of the pyramids, or around the royal sepulchres of Thebes. But this is not the only circumstance, in which the two nations differ with regard to their funeral ceremonies; for in general they are void of every kind of analogy.

However desirous we may be of knowing the species of architecture, and taste of ornaments, exhibited on the tombs of the Chinese emperors, yet unfortunately no such information is to be expected from the accounts of the Jesuits. All they have written on that subject can be considered only as a collection of fictions; and to prove this, we shall, however unwillingly, insert here the description given by Father du Halde of the pretended tomb of *Schi-chuan-di* :

This prince, says he, chose for his sepulchre the mount Ly. He caused it to be hollowed out, as one may say, even to the centre of the earth. Above, he erected a mausoleum, which resembled a mountain, five hundred feet high, and at least half a league in circumference. In the middle was a rich coffin; and around

*it were lamps and flambeaux, kept burning with human fat. Within the tomb, on one side, appeared a vast lake of quicksilver, on which were seen many birds of gold and silver : while the other side exhibited a complete assortment of furniture and arms. Thousands of precious jewels were strewed here and there. It had cost not only immense sums of money, but likewise the lives of many persons ; far besides the servants of the palace, who suffered death, upwards of ten thousand workmen were buried there alive All at once the people, who could no longer support the yoke, flew to arms. Hang-si demolished the vast inclosures. The coffin still remained ; until a shepherd, it is said, when looking for a stray sheep in the midst of the ruins, let fall some sparks of fire which consumed them altogether *.*

Such a description does not deserve to be severely criticised, because whoever reads it with the smallest reflection must be sufficiently disgusted. Those lamps with human grease, and birds of gold swimming on mercury within a tomb, are such childish prodigies, that our most wretched writers of romance would scarcely insert them among fairy-tales. Father du Halde might surely have exaggerated, in a far more ingenious manner, concerning China.

Through this cloud of fables, however, we discover two certain facts : in the first place, the tomb must have been wood, from its being destroyed by fire ; and we perceive likewise that unfortunate wretches were slaughtered on such occasions.

* Description of China, vol. ii.

The emperor *Schi-chuan-di* descended from a Chinese family of *Tzin*, and hated the Tartars, with whom he was frequently at war. Thus, it could not be from them, that he had borrowed the custom of immolating human victims; but he found it already established in China, where it is continued at the present day. Even the Jesuits authorise us to entertain great and melancholy suspicions on that head, when they say that the emperor *Can-hi* made a law to prevent the practice of sacrificing slaves at the decease of princes of the blood; and yet, some time after, women were strangled at the obsequies of *Tawang*, brother to the emperor *Can-hi*. This execution is so recent, that living witnesses of the fact might now be found at Peking. Considering the obstinacy of the Chinese in persisting to destroy their children with a brutal ferocity so well known, it is certainly not very astonishing to find them continuing to immolate human victims. Unenlightened as they are by philosophy, it is as difficult for them to make any progress in morality, as in the arts and sciences. At the funerals of private people, statues of paper, representing male and female servants, are always thrown into the fire; and we may presume, that this ceremony was invented by poor people, who had no slaves to sacrifice at their interments. Indeed we can easily conceive that few, except the emperors and princes, were in a situation to make such costly offerings. Mr. le Gentil observes on this occasion, in his *Voyage round the World*, that a great mixture of Indian customs is perceptible at the funerals of the

2

the

the Chinese. In fact their religion is a chaos of practices, adopted partly from the Indians, and still more perhaps from the Scythians, who, according to Herodotus, always interred some slaves and concubines with the corpse of their sovereign. This is very conformable to the dreadful scenes exhibited under Can-hi at the obsequies of Ta-vang.

The passion of the Chinese for the number nine must likewise be counted among the superstitions they have in common with the Tartars. Many steeples, or towers of nine stories, are seen throughout the whole country, merely from a whimsical inclination for this number. The same circumstance gives rise to the humiliating ceremony of bowing nine times, on approaching the throne of the emperors of China; and we learn from the history of *Gengis-Kan*, that it was likewise established at the court of that prince*.

Among all the towers of nine stories in China, not one is built of porcelain, as some amplifiers have asserted in their relations. What gave rise to this fable is a steeple in the neighbourhood of Nankin, in erecting which the Tartars employed bricks of a quality rather better than ordinary, and impressed with figures by means of moulds. Father du Halde, after giving a kind of description of this building, which he embellishes as much as possible, by adopting the style of Father le Comte, finishes with these expressions: *This, says he, is what the Chinese call the Porcelain Tower; although perhaps some of our*

* Petit de la Croix, Hist. de Gengis-kan.

Europeans might affect to style it the Tower of Brick *. Those, who give it that name, are surely far from being blameable ; for not a single piece of any thing like porcelain can be found in the whole edifice.

This tower is remarkable for a degree of solidity, very uncommon in the buildings of that country ; and, in fact, it was not constructed by the Chinese, but by *Koublai-Kan*, in commemoration of his conquest. On this account it has always been respected by the *Màndhuis*, while many others in the vicinity of *Nankin* were pillaged and destroyed, when that town was taken. Even the Tartars themselves, although desirous of preserving more severe discipline, could not then restrain their victorious troops ; who, as the Chinese pretend, among other excesses levelled the royal sepulchres and set fire to the sacred groves. Anciently, indeed, prodigious tracts planted with cypresses, served there as an inclosure to some wooden edifices. But it cannot be considered as a great misfortune, that such forests, equally useless both to gods and men, should be reduced to ashes, that the soil, as is now really the case, might serve for tillage. *Nieuhoff*, who visited *Nankin* soon after this event, found tranquillity already re-established in that town. We must therefore consider as fabulous what *Father le Comte* has related of the Tartars having carried all the Chinese women to market in sacks ; where he pretends they were sold, without distinction of age or rank, to the highest bidders. He even adds, that those, who perceived any signs

* Description of China, vol. ii.

of decrepitude on the unfortunate beings they had purchased in this manner, threw them without mercy into the river. This story seems to be founded solely on the custom of the Tartars, when they gain a battle, of cutting off the ears of the dead, and filling nine sacks. We know how often they practised the same thing in Poland; as well as in Bohemia, at the defeat of the duke Henry, near Lignitz, in the year one thousand two hundred and forty-two. Some corps of Eleuths and Calmaucs having been vanquished by the emperor of China in one thousand six hundred and ninety-six, he ordered their long hair to be cut off, and collected likewise into nine sacks.

The Brick-Tower of nine stories, concerning which we have already spoken, is garnished on the outside, like many others, with rows of small bells, and the noise they produce, when shaken by the wind, is very disagreeable. Some have pretended that these chimes resembled what was seen on an Etruscan monument somewhere near *Clusium*; and the Etruscans, they add, were closely connected with the Egyptians, whose works they copied continually. But we should observe, that Pliny gives us very plainly to understand, that the monument of *Clusium* never existed. We are therefore at a loss to know whether Varro amused himself with inventing this fable, or had really extracted what he relates from some obscure romance*. The idea of any great

* Pliny appears to insinuate that the description of the monument of *Clusium* was taken from that collection of fables which he calls *fabulæ Etruscae*.

inter-

intercourse between the Egyptians and Etruscans seems to be founded entirely on a passage of Strabo, badly interpreted, added to the opinion of some modern Italians. The Abbé Winckelman could not discover any resemblance whatever in the monuments of those two nations, who, according to all appearances, were as little connected as the Laplanders and the Spaniards.

The Chinese, persuaded that nothing in architecture can be more magnificent than their tower of nine stories, are constantly forming models of such building about two feet high, and covered with mother of pearl. They endeavour to dispose of such baubles to European merchants, taking care to add a certain number of those small statues, called idols by the missionaries, but known to us by the name of Chinese figures. They are certainly intended to represent tutelary genii, and local divinities; for the numerous steeples, concerning which travellers have proposed so many conjectures, can be nothing but pagodas. Thence the alarm is spread, in case of fire, and on these the hours are indicated by sand-glasses, which are however far from being exact. Prior to the year one thousand five hundred and sixty, not one good sun-dial could be found in all China: neither were any of the lettered there acquainted with the first principles of gnomonics, or capable, says Father Gresson, of calculating a meridian shade.

With regard to the *Pai-leou*, generally believed to be triumphal arches, not one of them approaches what we call the New Gothic; and the greater part,

as Father le Comte acknowledges, do not deserve consideration *. Yet the passion of the Chinese for those buildings is very great ; and the smallest towns waste much timber in that way, which would be much better employed in constructing huts for those miserable Troglodytes, concerning whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. It is necessary to remark, that this was far from being the taste of the Egyptians, who never had even a vestige of any triumphal arch, until after the conquest of the Greeks, or rather of the Romans. What is seen in the environs of *Enfene*, or *Antinoopolis*, is a work of the emperor Adrian ; and to me it appears to be nothing more than a portico.

Among the *Pai-leou* of China, none can be considered, either from their structure or characters, as very ancient ; and Father du Halde considers the inscription on the brazen column, erected, according to him, about the year fifty of our era, as surpassing in antiquity all other monuments of the empire †. But that pillar, supposed to be seen on the frontiers of Tonquin, appears very suspicious : no traveller can say any thing with certainty further than that the Tonquinese have covered it, as we are told, with a heap of stones ; and consequently indeed not much is to be seen. Besides, when we attend to that long succession of ages mentioned by all the chronicles of China, it must be allowed, that an inscription of one thousand seven hundred years is very modern.

* New Memoirs on China, letter iii.

† Description of China, vol. i.

No circumstance has enabled us to form any judgment on some characters, said to be found on the *Van-ly-czin* ; but if they have not been added, when the wall received some repairs, we must consider them as more ancient than the column of brass.

Great simplicity prevails in the interior of the Chinese houses, as well as throughout the other despotic states of Asia ; where the poverty of the people and continual distrusts prevent the acquisition of much furniture. Riches are there buried in the earth, rather than exposed to such risks ; and the same utensils are employed to various purposes. Yet neither in Turkey, nor Persia, are such miserable families to be found as in China, where they are destitute of all the conveniencies of life. Exclusive of those, who in the southern provinces live entirely on fish, and remain constantly in their barks without clothes of any kind, many have nothing more than holes in the earth for their habitation. Thirty *lys* from *Ho-lou* after having passed *Tchang-nan*, says Father Fontaney, whole families of Chinese are seen living in grottos ; for China also, he adds, has its Troglodytes *. Not far beyond the town of *Ping-teng*, great numbers inhabit caverns ten or twelve feet broad and twenty long, one of which frequently contains several families.

It is credible that these Troglodytes, rendered at times desperate by this misery, associate with the robbers and certain bands of men who wander with some few flocks in the interior provinces, where no

* Journal of Travels from *Pekin* to *Kiang-tcheou*.

signs appear of agriculture. Their mode of living may be rendered more evident by the example of those Nomades in Spain, who wander with their cattle from Lerida in Catalonia to the very plains of Andalusia, without finding the smallest obstruction in all that prodigious distance. It is easy to conceive, that, in a well-cultivated country, this could not be permitted, and that such flocks must feed only on deserted fields or barren lands, where no person is interested to have the limits ascertained. In the vast solitudes of China, and even in those of Tartary, the monks of some temples and bonzeries have formed commodious dwellings, and admirable gardens watered by rivulets, which are conducted from the mountains in artificial cascades. These hermits, who are nothing better than those of Europe, could not sleep one night at their ease, if the banditti of China were less religious: but they respect the pagodas, or pillage them only in the greatest extremity. It is besides possible, that the holy men, who inhabit them, being in correspondence with the robbers, assist in concealing their plunder. In this likewise a resemblance is found with the monasteries in the deserts of Spain and Portugal; and we may therefore pronounce woe to that country, which contains wandering shepherds and hermits.

Near the principal towns of China, some villages here and there have houses covered with tiles. On advancing into the centre of the country, the best buildings are wretched cottages of mud, thatched with rushes, and in many towns of the second rank clay

clay alone is used for the walls of the dwellings. As the Chinese have never succeeded in glass-work, nothing of the kind is seen even in the windows of their palaces. The saloon, where the emperor *Cangbi* gave audience to the Russian ambassador, says Brandt, had wretched preparations of paper to admit the light*; because the glass-houses established by that prince were then, and are still, incapable of producing any thing to answer that purpose. In some provinces waxed silks, shells, and mother-of-pearl, are used for windows. This likewise is the case in the cathedral of *Goa*: but such substances admit very little light, because they are less transparent than horn, or the specular stone of the ancients, of which some fragments are preserved in the churches of Italy.

It is curious enough to see the Chinese forming artificial rocks in what they call gardens; and then asking Europeans, if their artists could produce any thing so magnificent. They might be answered, that to heap up stones at random requires neither genius, art, industry, taste, nor any notion of the beautiful and useful. They would therefore act more wisely by sowing such spots with rice or wheat, to render famine less fatal in China. We are assured

* Beschreibung einer grossen Chinesischen Reise.—Brandt says likewise that this saloon had no ceiling of any kind, so that the roof was seen in the apartment, as in most of the Chinese buildings, of which a tent has evidently been the model.* The pillars, it should be remarked, are not always round, but frequently cut into five and seven faces.

that the empire contains two thousand mountains; and nothing can be more foolish than to augment the number, instead of endeavouring to render the country more level. Every person knows, without our dwelling on the circumstance here, that neither the Chinese quarter, nor that of the Tartars in Pekin, contains any temples or public edifices superior in structure or magnificence to those of the other towns. The emperor, who alone has the privilege of offering solemn sacrifices to the genii of the sky, the earth, the mountains, rivers, and valleys, never perform the ceremony but under tents. This custom, which should be considered as very ancient, is likewise conformable to what we have said concerning the primitive state of the Chinese, when they were wont to encamp like the Tartars. The tents employed for these sacrifices, are pitched during the days of the solemnity in the *Tien-tang*, and the *Ti-tang*; and they are afterwards preserved with the sacred vases and tablets. Two particular houses are destined to receive them: the one, consecrated to the genius of the sky, is round; and the other, sacred to the genius of the earth, is square, according to the admirable cosmography of *Han-li*, and the profound knowledge of the lettered in China. They all agreed that our world is a cube, and not a globe; and the architects were obliged of course to comply in the best manner they could with the decision. Mr. Chambers, who did not attend to these circumstances, is greatly deceived, when he compares the Chinese pavilions to the monopteral temples of the ancients,

ancients. By such extravagant inferences, all the parts of Grecian architecture might be discovered in the palace of Pekin, as it is described by Isbrand Ides. Besides, Mr. Chambers does not seem to have been informed of a fact relating to the pagodas of Fo, seen in China: we are assured by a traveller, that their plan and interior disposition resemble almost in every point those of the pagodas of Hindoostan. Thus it is scarcely to be doubted, that this mode of building was unknown to the Chinese, prior to the introduction of the worship of Fo, the epoch of which is less ancient than our present era. Even admitting that *Lao-kium* had made a journey to India, as might well have happened, it is certain that he did not establish the true religion of that country in China.

The state of architecture among the Egyptians is an immense subject; but we shall endeavour to include in a few pages what seems most interesting. Those people were always building: one great work produced another still more prodigious; and if fortune had preserved them from the yoke of the Persians and of the Greeks, they would have endeavoured to level the mountains of Thebais, rather than remain idle. All their obelisks are so much alike, that when they have no characters, it is very difficult to distinguish them one from another. It seems strange, that they did not grow weary of rearing such monuments; and yet among their last kings we find Amasis and Nectanebus, continuing those laborious undertakings with as much ardor, as any of their numerous predecessors.

Mr. Le Roy must be deceived, when he pretends, that the rustic shed had been adopted by the Egyptians, in the same manner that Vitruvius says it served among the Greeks, as a model for the most superb edifices on earth *. Every thing tends to prove that the Egyptians, prior to their being united as a nation, lived like Troglodytes in the caverns of Ethiopia. Thus a grotto, rather than a cottage, must have afforded the first notions of their architecture. The savages of Greece, on the contrary, from the diversity of soil and climate, which in such cases has a great influence, were under the necessity of erecting huts. No resemblance therefore ever existed between the roofs of the Grecian temples and those of the Egyptians; and as the latter were entirely flat, they could not have been copied after the *rustic shed* of Vitruvius.

Pharaoh Amasis caused a huge piece of hollow rock to be brought from the vicinity of Elephantis, and placed it before the portico of the temple of Minerva in the town of Sais. The Greeks, who composed words at will, called the interior of this stone a *monolithic chamber*; and the first idea of such an apartment must evidently have been taken from a grotto.

When we reflect on the prodigious excavations, made continually by the Egyptians in their mountains, and the singular predilection of the priests for those caverns, where they passed the greater part of their lives, it is no longer doubtful, that, in former times, they had lived like Troglodytes. Thence are

* Ruins of the noblest Monuments of Greece, vol. i.
derived

derived likewise all the characteristics of their edifices : some seem to be facitious rocks, where the walls exceed twenty-four feet in thickness ; and pillars of more than thirty feet in circumference are not at all uncommon. If any thing can be compared to what these extraordinary people erected on the surface of the earth, it must be their subterraneous labors. Some ancient authors had good information, that different apartments were constructed an hundred and sixty feet below the pyramids, communicating with each other by passages, to which Ammianus Marcellinus has given the Greek name of *syringes* *. The only one of these now known is that leading through the most northern of all the pyramids ; and it becomes every year more imperfect, from the rolling in of sand and ruins. Yet Prosper Alpin assures us, that, about the year one thousand five hundred and eighty-five, a man, having descended there with a compass, arrived at the place where the way divides into two ramifications, one taking a southern, and the other an eastern direction. This could no longer be traced by Maillet, Greves, Thevenot, Vanleeb, and Father Sicard, who came many years later ; and as to Belo, his negligence in describing this monument is such, that what he relates does not deserve a perusal †.

Herodotus knew beyond a doubt that, after descending below ground, a person could pass into the

* Lib. xxii.

† In the 228th page of his *Observations* he makes the shell of the great pyramid twice as long as it really is.

apartments of the pyramid of the labyrinth. As this is exactly the case in that of Memphis, the interior disposition of which is perfectly well known at the present day, we have every reason to believe, that the same mode of construction was common to the other monuments of that kind. They all must have had subterraneous vaults, and secret passages, like that discovered in the thirtieth degree of latitude; which ever since the time of Pliny has been improperly taken for a pit. Yet no water could possibly enter there, any more than into the catacombs of *Sakara*, where the ground is still less elevated; for all these excavations are formed in calcareous substances, where no humidity can remain. Strabo has indicated a *Serapeum*, or chapel of Serapis, amidst the moving sands to the west of Memphis, which appears to have been the real spot where the mouths of the different galleries, leading below the pyramids of *Gizeh*, were united.

Among the crypts and grottos of Heptanomis and Thebais, those of *Alyi* and *Hipponon* are large enough to contain a thousand horses: we know those of *Speos Artemidos*, of *Hieracon*, *Selinon*, *Antaeopolis*, and *Silsili*; as well as the syringes, or subterraneous passages mentioned by Pausanias, in the vicinity of the vocal statue *. But although travellers meet with others every day, they have not yet discovered the one hundredth part of such excavations. We cannot however admit entirely the tradition, credited in ancient times, which reported that the whole town of Thebes

was situated over crypts, and that their ramifications extended under the bed of the Nile *. What might have given credit to this is the circumstance of certain grottos being really seen on the banks of the river, between *Korna* and *Habou*, where it is said the first kings of Egypt were wont to lodge, prior to the building of Thebes.

To the north-west of *Korna* are those excavations, called by the Arabs *Biban-el-Moluk*. Concerning the purpose to which they were destined no doubt was ever entertained either by the ancients or the moderns. They are in fact the tombs of the first dynasties, or royal families; and those, who place the bodies of the ancient Pharaohs in the pyramids, are egregiously mistaken. At *Biban-el-Moluk* not one single stone has the least of a pyramidal figure; and this confirms us in the opinion, that none of the chambers in the pyramids of *Memphis* ever contained any mummies: but they were placed many feet below the foundation of those edifices, the form of which, in the Egyptian worship, had no resemblance to that of the tombs.

Some of the grottos we have mentioned contained embalmed bodies, and they were generally kept in an upright posture, as occupying least space. That rule seems indeed to have been always observed, except with the kings, who lay at full length in the sarcophagi. We must not give entire credit, as some have done, to a passage of Silius Italicus; which besides does not concern the attitude of the mummies

* Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvi. cap. 14.

in the cells, but the manner of placing them in the houses. This bad poet wishes to insinuate, without any appearance of truth, that the Egyptians assembled their dead around the tables of the living *.

Egypt had likewise caverns, which were never used as sepulchres : such was that of Diana, or the *Speos Artemidos*, still seen at *Beni-Hasan* ; and the figures, sculptured there, have certainly not been executed by the Greeks. Many others of the same kind were cut in the rocks of Ethiopia † ; where, we learn from Bermudez, the priests initiated, or offered sacrifices, and even retired to study ‡. We have been told of a certain Pancrates, who did not leave those dreary abodes during a period of twenty-four years ; and it is generally supposed, that Orpheus, Eumolpus, and Pythagoras, were admitted there likewise.

On considering this mode of studying underground, it no longer appears astonishing, that the priests contracted the habit of throwing a mysterious veil over all their real or imaginary knowledge. Thus, in many circumstances, it is as difficult to determine the extent of their erudition, as that of their

* ——— *Ægyptia tellus.*

Condit odorato post funus stantia busto

Corpora ; & à mensis exsanguem haud separat umbram. Lib. xiii,

† Alvarez, *Rerum Æthiopicar.*

‡ *Propheta Ægyptiorum non permittunt ut metalli artifices, sculptoresque Deos representent, ne a recepta abeant forma ; sed illudunt vulgum in templorum atriis accipitrum ibidemque rostra sculpi curant, jubeunt interea sacra subterranea quæ profundis illorum mysteriis velamento sunt.* SYNESIUS.

ignorance ;

ignorance ; and therefore such opposite judgments have been formed concerning their philosophy, which some confine to a very small scale, while others consider it as almost boundless : but it is truly interesting to observe, that the custom of retiring into cells, practised by the priests, gave rise to the mysteries of antiquity. Without this, none perhaps would ever have been invented ; and wheresoever those of Egypt were received, the mode of celebrating them in caverns was likewise adopted, until the institution became at length essentially changed. Bishop Warburton led all Europe into errors, concerning the pretended secret revealed to the persons initiated in Egypt, because he considered the letter, said to be written by Alexander to his mother, as authentic. In fact it was the invention of some Christian ; and a grosser fraud was never practised. Mr. Silhouette, who translated these fragments of Warburton, should have perceived the ridiculousness of placing in Egypt a high-priest called *Leon*. Never before the conquest of Alexander did any Egyptian priest bear that name ; and it would not be more absurd to pretend that an emperor of China was called Charles Martel *. Much more might be said here, concerning the supposed letter, were it not now allowed to be apocryphal by all the learned of Europe. Besides, how could the initiated be told, that the gods of Egypt had been mortals, when it is known that the

* Mr. Silhouette cites this letter of Alexander to refute the Abbé Pluche, who believed the mysteries were relative to agriculture.

Egyptians,

Egyptians, so far from ever adoring deified men, held that kind of worship in the greatest abhorrence?

The mysteries seem to have been originally a secret instruction, given only to the priests, who, prior to their consecration, experienced a panic terror. They were afterwards conducted by dark windings to a place very full of light; and this suggested the idea of copying the phenomena of thunder and lightning, as we have already mentioned in the first volume of these researches. All the priests of Egypt without exception were to be initiated, as Diodorus says, in what were called the mysteries of the god Pan; and not one of them escaped a panic terror in the obscurity of the subterraneous passages*.

This taste for mysteries and enigmas was introduced among the common people, and produced no inconsiderable effect on their character. It cannot be denied, that the deputies of the provinces, or Nomes, might at times in their assemblies have treated of such important matters as required the greatest secrecy: but we must allow that none, but the Egyptians, would ever have thought of assembling their national representatives in a labyrinth, to which they were conducted by the most ob-

* It does not appear that the Egyptians ever revealed the great mysteries to any who did not belong to the sacerdotal class; except perhaps to Pythagoras. In time, every person who was not guilty of some public crime could obtain admission to the lesser mysteries. Those vagabonds called Egyptian priests in Greece and Italy required considerable sums for initiations; and the gypsies practise similar mummeries to obtain money.

scure windings, as Pliny attests in positive terms*.

The Chinese have no word in their language to express a labyrinth; because nothing approaches that form among all the edifices of their country. It may be boldly asserted, that they are incapable at this day of conceiving any idea of such a building, either from plan or description. Even the learned of Europe cannot flatter themselves with having formed very accurate notions concerning the labyrinth; for although many of its ruins still remain, yet travellers in general miss the spot, most probably by directing their researches too far towards the west. Paul Lucas, who could not write, and his compiler Fourmont, may easily be excused for mistaking the ruins of the castle of Caron for fragments of that fabric; but it is unpardonable in Father Sicard, and Mr. Pococke, to fall into the same error. This pretended castle of Caron, according to different plans, seems to have been a chapel of Serapis, scarcely one hundred feet in length, without any appearance either of a pyramid, or labyrinth: while Strabo assures us, that those persons, who visited the terrace of the labyrinth, saw around them a whole country covered with hewn stones; and the view was terminated by an edifice of a pyramidal form.

Thus we perceive how many difficulties are encountered by those, who study the monuments of a country, concerning which the moderns have con-

* *Majorem autem in parte transitus est per tenebras.* Lib. xxxvi. cap. 13.

spired with the ancients to give us false ideas. The latter indeed were probably deceived by being at the discretion of a set of men called Interpreters, whose college was established in the reign of Psammeticus ; and who might be compared to those people called Ciceroni at Rome. Philosophers, who were really desirous of acquiring information in Egypt, found it absolutely necessary to remain there during many years, as we find by the example of Pythagoras, Eudoxius, and Plato. But travellers, who only went and returned, like Herodotus, without knowing a word of the language of the country, could learn nothing but from the interpreters. Those men perceiving the inclination of the Greeks for the marvellous, amused them like children with stories inconsistent with common sense, and unworthy of the majesty of history. They probably invented the tradition adopted at this day, which says that the pyramids were erected contrary to the advice of the priests, who protested in vain against such undertakings. Yet we see very plainly, that they were constructed particularly under the direction of the sacerdotal class ; by whose aid they received an exact position, either by means of the shade of a style, or from observations made on some star when passing the meridian. Their real object in this was never revealed even to Thales, concerning whom Pliny and Plutarch relate one very great falsehood : they pretend that he taught the Egyptians to measure the height of the pyramids by the shadow, which could never be
done

done in the manner they describe *. Thales, on arriving from Miletus at Heliopolis, was as ignorant as possible, and knew nothing of either mathematics or astronomy; and the little knowledge he acquired afterwards was entirely due to the priests of Egypt, whose scholar he had been for many years. Such a person cannot be supposed to have taught his masters; and we must conclude for his honor, that no report of the kind originated with him; otherwise his ingratitude would be unpardonable.

Those people have spoken without reflection, who pretend that the pyramids received a particular position, in order to obtain an unchangeable meridian, by which observations might be made to determine whether or not the poles are subject to variation. In that case, one pyramid would have been sufficient, instead of rearing so many along the whole coast of Libya, from Memphis to the labyrinth. Neither is it true, that they ever served as gnomons, whatever may have been said to that effect by modern writers: the ancients took care never to assert any thing of the kind; perhaps from having already had some notion of the consumption of shade. Solinus, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Cassiodorus, express themselves indeed in a very improper manner on this point; and all we can conclude from their argu-

* To obtain the height of a pyramid by its shadow it is necessary to measure one side of the base and know the middle. As Pliny and Plutarch do not represent Thales as beginning by this operation, we must consider what they relate concerning this matter as fabulous.

ments

ments amounts to nothing more than that the pyramids never cast the smallest shade at any time of the year or day. This, says Marcellinus, proceeded from the mechanism of their construction, *mechanicâ ratione*; but every person must perceive, that his mode of reasoning is directly opposite to the laws of nature*.

We shall here endeavour, in a few words, to explain this matter. The largest of the pyramids, situated in twenty-nine degrees fifty minutes and some seconds north latitude, begins towards the vernal equinox to afford no shadow at mid-day beyond its base; and those, who then walk round this huge mass of stones upwards of five hundred feet high, never lose sight of the sun. The architects must have foreseen this effect, proceeding from the pyramidal form of the edifice; and the meridian shade during one half of the year is confined to the northern face, without ever reaching the earth. Thus nothing more imperfect, as a sun-dial, could be invented than the great pyramid, by which even the period of the summer solstice cannot be ascertained; because the shadow is then too high to be distinctly perceived. Yet the celebrated chronologist Vignoles supposes that the priests calculated the equi-

* Solinus, Polyhist. cap. 42.—Am. Marcel. Hist. lib. 22.—Cassidor. Variarum, lib. 7. As Solinus appears to have been the first propagator of this error, we shall quote his own expressions: *Pyramides turres sunt in Ægypto fastigiatæ ultra celsitudinem omnem, quæ fieri manu possit, itaque mensuram umbrarum egressæ, nullas habent umbras.*

noxes by means of the pyramids * ; but he would never have formed this opinion, had his plans of those monuments been as exact, and his maps of Egypt as good, as those now published.

It should be remarked, that the Egyptians observed no determined proportion between the breadth of the base, and the height of the pyramids. As their dimensions varied so considerably, no idea could be had of having recourse to them, in order to find out the equinoctial days ; which, according to Macrobius, were indicated by simple styles, or, as others pretend, by water-clocks. One fact was entirely unknown to Vignoles : the pyramid, called *el Harem el Kieber el Koubli* by the Arabs, has a base much broader, in proportion to its height, than the great pyramid of *Memphis*. Thus beginning much sooner than the other to cast no shade at mid-day, it cannot serve in any manner to indicate the equinoxes. Besides, it may be apposite to ask, what means were employed by the priests of Thebes, who had no pyramid in all their country, whatever Abulfeda has asserted to the contrary ; and yet their college was the

* De Annis Ægyptiac. in Miscell. Berolin. tom. iv. It is merely an effect of chance that the great pyramid begins towards the equinox to consume its shadow at noon ; for in some of the others this phenomenon is observable sooner. We can say with certainty that the greatest meridian shade of the pyramid of *Gizeh* and all the rest indicates the winter solstice ; but it must have been very difficult to ascertain that of the summer ; and besides, all such observations were rendered inaccurate by the penumbra.

first in Egypt, as well for astronomical knowledge, as in point of antiquity.

We must not therefore attribute views to the Egyptians, which they could not have entertained without discovering a total want of common sense. For surely a simple dial-pin is better adapted to afford exact indications in such matters, than any mass, where the shade must be so greatly impaired.

The pyramids, as well as the obelisks, were monuments erected in honor of the Being who enlightens the universe; and this determined the priests to give them a particular position. Sepulchral cells might have been constructed within these edifices, sufficient to contain the bodies of all the royal family. Yet only two apartments are hitherto discovered, and one single chest, which, in opposition to the opinion of Strabo, many enlightened travellers, such as Doctor Shaw, do not conceive to be a sarcophagus, where any carcase was ever deposited; and, in reality, the thing is very improbable. Endless conjectures have been hazarded; but hitherto no writer has reflected, that this chest might be what the Egyptians called the *Tomb of Osiris*. Many such were found throughout the whole country; and the superstition, attached to their construction, consisted in making the rays of the sun descend around them, without causing any shade on the ground at mid-day, during at least one half of the year. This phenomenon continued longest in the southern pyramids of *Illabon* and *Hauara*, towards the extremity of the plain called *Cochome*; and from their ruinous state, they

they may be considered as more ancient than those of Memphis. The latter are thought still capable of resisting the lapse of five thousand years, according to a calculation formed on the progress of their decay since the days of Herodotus. That historian mentions many figures and characters on the exterior of those edifices, now no longer visible; but Mr. Norden spoke without reflection, when he asserted, in his Journey through Nubia, that they were constructed prior to the invention of hieroglyphics. Such mistakes shock all notions of history; and it were to be desired, that the greater part of travellers, before their departure, or at least after their return, would take some pains to improve their studies.

The priests of ancient Egypt, by determining so very accurately the position of the pyramids, have enabled us to ascertain, that no variation has taken place in the direction of the poles. In vain should we look on the whole surface of our globe for any other means of obtaining this information. Had Chaldæa ever possessed edifices equally solid with those of Egypt, some prodigious ruins would still be found there: but from being formed of brick and bitumen, all the higher parts soon fell asunder; and some remains are discovered only at a few feet above the foundation, where the tenacity of the bitumen has been preserved by the humidity. This is most remarkable in a place supposed to be the site of a temple of *Belus*; but such matters do not deserve investigation. Besides, in no country do we find Chaldæan statues, or monuments; while all the cabinets

of Europe are furnished with Egyptian antiquities. We may consider as the greatest exaggeration what Ctesias and Diodorus Siculus relate of an obelisk, attributed by them to Semiramis, of which no person however could speak from his own knowledge *. Egypt, on the contrary, must have exhibited more than eighty of the largest size. The operation of erecting them was not very difficult among people, who, from having transported many such masses, had acquired an experience, which Fontana wanted, when he employed six hundred men, and one hundred and forty horses, upon that of the Vatican. The power of the cables and capstans being known, it is calculated, that this force would have been sufficient to raise ten thousand pound weight more than was necessary on that occasion †. As the Egyptians did not place their obelisks on such elevated pedestals as those so improperly employed at Rome, they might, with four hundred men and eighty horses, have managed any monument of that kind, even with capstans alone. The story, told by some authors, concerning one of the Pharaohs, who, they say, tied his son to the top of one of these stones to make the workmen more cautious, is too notoriously absurd to require refutation. By examining attentively the form and position of the obelisks of Egypt, it is easy to perceive, that they could never be intended as gnomons, according to the opinion so pre-

* Jackson, in his *Chronological Antiquities*, proves that no such obelisk ever existed at Babylon.

† *Epistola de Obelisco Romæ.*

valent in Europe. Two were placed at the entrance of the temples ; and when those buildings could be approached by different ways, the number of such spires was augmented in proportion. This is evident at the present day, in the ruins of the temple of Phylæ ; in that of Thebes ; and at the supposed tomb of Osymandyas ; a word evidently composed of *Mendes* and *Osiris*.

Thus we find, that nothing like gnomons was the object ; otherwise the absurdity is evident of placing them so near each other, that their shadows must frequently be confounded together. Besides, the upper part, called the *pyramidium*, could not give any precise indication without the addition of a globe, like that employed at Rome under Augustus and Constantius. Nothing of the kind however is mentioned by any ancient author, as having been practised by the Egyptians ; and we see, by the paintings taken from the ruins of *Herculaneum*, and still better by the *Palestrina Mosaic*, that the obelisks are invariably represented without a globe, or any place to insert a style, or bar. When a Roman, named Maximus, was prefect of Egypt, he cut away the point, in order to place a globe on the obelisk of Alexandria ; and this must have appeared to the Egyptians as sacrilege. Thus the members of the Academy of Inscriptions at Paris were very ill informed, when they made their report to the Academy of Sciences, relative to the antiquity of supporting globes with obelisks * : for such was never the practice of the Egyptians.

* *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions*, vol. iii.

Apion, the grammarian, indeed pretends, that Moses placed concave hemispheres on pillars, instead of obelisks; but he speaks like a person altogether ignorant of the matter; and Josephus, who was a still worse reasoner, and more ignorant in natural philosophy, refutes him by the most pitiful arguments. Vitruvius, Cleomedes, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella, describe the solar time-keepers, used in Egypt, by which Eratosthenes measured, or verified the measure of the earth*. According to them, they were really concave hemispheres, with a style raised perpendicularly in the middle; but it is truly ridiculous to justify Apion, by supposing that they could be placed on the top of obelisks, or high pillars, where no person, without the aid of a ladder, could observe the declination of the shadow. Although the priests frequently had recourse to these instruments, they esteemed still more their hydroscopes or water-clocks, because they could employ them during the night in astronomical observations. Yet it is difficult to believe Orus Apollo, when he says that they emptied themselves precisely in an equinoctial day†.

We have never had an opportunity of seeing either the sand-glasses, or clepsydras, made in China; but yet we know that they do not represent a monkey discharging urine. The priests of Egypt thought proper to give that whimsical form to their water-

* Vitruv. Architect. lib. ix.—Cleomed. de Meteorolog.—Macrobius in Som. Scip. lib. i.—Mart. Capell. de Geometria.

† Hieroglyph, lib. i.

clocks;

clocks; which, besides, were graduated and divided in another manner than those of China. Twelve Egyptian hours are only equal to six with the Chinese*; and this is of more consequence than we are led to believe at first view; for in fact it is not less essential than the different modes of dividing the signs of the zodiac in these two countries; where no resemblance can be found beyond what might well have proceeded from chance.

This is not the proper place to examine, what should reasonably be thought of the inscriptions on the obelisks. Father Kircher has made every effort to persuade us, that they contain neither historical facts, nor narratives of any kind; but he did not know that these characters are totally unconnected with what properly constitutes an obelisk. No less than three of the largest size are known to have been *pure*, that is to say, without any appearance of engraving on the four faces, although they were certainly placed during many ages at the entrance of the temple of the Sun. Yet we cannot accuse the priests and sculptors of ignorance in hieroglyphics, as Hardouin ridiculously insinuates, when speaking of one of those dumb spires, erected by Nectanebus†.

Abenephi, the Arab, and many others, who are not his countrymen, have confounded the obelisks with the pretended hermetic columns. To prevent further confusion, it is necessary that we should intro-

* Bayer de Horis Sinicis.—Ulug Beig de Epochis celebr.

† Plin. lib. xxxvi. cap. 14.

duce accurate ideas and fixed terms in what relates to these two kinds of monuments, so totally unconnected*.

Manetho, in composing his history of Egypt, consulted the *Stela of Hermes*, preserved in the syringes, or subterraneous passages †; but we do not find that he had ever recourse to the inscriptions on the obelisks. The word *Stela*, or Hermetic Column, must not however be taken in a literal sense; for that kind of monument was at best only a cippus, and more frequently a mere tablet of stone. The Arabian alchymists were well informed of this, when they called the flat emerald, mentioned in the preceding section, the smaragdine table, as others have been called the tables of the decalogue.

Ancient writers in general confirm what Manetho says of the hermetic *Stela* being preserved in the most secret part of the temples, such as the *adytum*, and in the cells where the priests retired to study ‡. By this we find how different they must have been from the obelisks, which were exposed to public view at the entrance of the principal edifices. On monuments, so generally seen, and so significant from their figure, engraved characters were not essential, but the inscriptions alone constituted the hermetic *Stela*.

Mr. Jablonski, whose authority must ever have great weight in all such matters, has proved by in-

* Abenephi, apud Kirch. in Obelisco Pamphilio.

† Synoel. in Chron.

‡ Apotelesmat. lib. v.

vincible

vincible arguments, that the *Thoth*, *Mercurius Trimegistus*, and *Hermes* of the Egyptians, is a mere mythological spectre, and not any person who really ever existed *. Yet the distinction he makes, between the ancient and modern *Hermes*, is not altogether perfect. The time of the first *Hermes* should be considered, properly speaking, to continue as long as the priests confined themselves to engraving their hieroglyphics on stone; and the era of the second began when they employed books of *papyrus*; because with them even to touch parchment was unlawful. As those men always spoke allegorically, they have led our modern chronologists into innumerable errors. It is with a smile mixed with compassion that we read the controversies of these pretended calculators, concerning the real period when *Hermes* lived: they might as well dispute about the reign of king Oberon.

Pliny may be considered as under a mistake, when he pretends that the obelisk seen in Heliopolis, at more than one hundred and sixty leagues from the place where it was hewn, must be the most ancient. He fell into this error, because the Greeks sometimes employed the word Heliopolis to denote the town of Thebes; where, apparently, the first obelisks had been placed before the temple of Jupiter Ammon, to adorn the capital of Egypt. Some modern geographers have followed very uncertain indications, in fixing the extent of that town; and Mr. D'Anville, who supposed its circuit to have been nine leagues,

* Pantheon Ægypt. lib. v.

has exceeded all bounds of probability. The Jesuits, who are known to have exaggerated greatly every thing belonging to China, give Pekin six leagues in circumference; and it would be reduced to two, if the houses were of three stories, instead of being wretched ground-floors, which require more surface than the regular buildings of Europe. Yet four hours are sufficient for riding conveniently on horse-back round this kind of Chinese camp, which a spark of fire may reduce in one day to ashes, without leaving even a ruin; while Buscovich suspects, that, after the destruction of Constantinople, some fragments at least might remain of its mosques and *befesteins* *.

The houses of Thebes, according to Diodorus, were of four or five stories; and, in that case, a circumference of nine leagues would suppose a greater heap of houses than ever was seen upon earth, without even excepting Babylon, where apparently many dwellings had but one floor. By making a distinction between the town of Thebes, and the villages scattered along the banks of the Nile, every thing marvellous will disappear. Dydimus, who must have had some knowledge of an actual survey of that place, calculates the whole surface at only three thousand seven hundred *arouræ*; and thus we find a town much less than Paris. The constant contradictions and variations of the ancients, concerning Thebes, prove the uncertainty of its limits; but, pro-

* Journal of Travels from Constantinople to Poland.

perly speaking, the buildings on the Libyan side did not belong to that city *.

Memphis was computed to be three leagues in circumference. This estimate must have included the great ponds, now entirely filled up, the park, or accasia, sycamore, and palm-trees planted in clusters, and all the royal mansion of the Pharaohs. It is known that the palace extended from one extremity of the town to the other; because most probably the seraglio, chapels, stables, and other out-houses, adjoined the principal dwelling. Memphis, however, augmented only in proportion as Thebes declined. The state of population in Egypt did not allow these two cities to flourish at the same time; and when Mr. Origny asserts, that twenty thousand towns would not have injured the cultivated lands of that country †, we can only say, that this resembles his other dreams concerning the isle of Elephantis. Its extent, according to him, was prodigious; although, from what we have already observed, the reader must perceive that it formed merely a point in the Nile.

Memphis in turn ceded to the increasing grandeur of Ptolemais and Alexandria. Another revolution of the same kind took place, on the building of

* No two ancient authors agree with regard to the size of Thebes. The assertions of Dydimus cannot be reconciled either with what Cato quotes from Stephen of Byzantium, or with the accounts of Diodorus, Strabo, or Eustathius. They are all in contradiction to each other. The extent of *Avaris*, situated in lower Egypt, must likewise have been greatly exaggerated.

† *Egypte ancienne*, tom. i.

Cairo ; and modern travellers have been as much deceived in the size of that town, as of Thebes. We may be assured, that its circuit never amounted to three French leagues, or eight English miles, as some have falsely asserted.

If Diodorus has given too much elevation to the houses of ancient Egypt, they have been no less misrepresented by Mr. Pococke, who pretends that they were nothing more than tents ; and according to this idea, an Egyptian town consisted of an encampment round a temple. But he is the only person, who ever accused the Egyptians of that manner of life, which they held in such aversion, that they would not permit even the Jews to live in tents. The Turks ought in good policy to have acted in the same manner, with regard to the Bedouin Arabs, who, by continuing to encamp, bring ruin on the different provinces ; and the maxim of preventing whole families from leading a wandering life, should be strictly observed in every country.

Having proceeded, as we proposed, to place limits to the too great extent of Thebes, it is equally necessary to undeceive ourselves with regard to the temples of ancient Egypt. They were certainly much less numerous than many authors believed, before the different ruins had been well ascertained. It is generally understood, that the trunk of the palm-tree was the model for the columns of all these edifices : but, in that case, they would have preserved a general resemblance ; and, on the contrary, nothing could be more varied. The same thing is remarkable in their
chapters :

Chapiters: those in the form of a bell reversed have been adopted in the Corinthian order; and the body of that chapter is still called *campana*. Thus the adventure of the basket, found by Callimachus, supported by leaves of acanthus, is nothing more than a childish fable, invented by the Greeks, who wished to conceal their having borrowed any thing from the Egyptians, while the contrary is manifestly evident. They pretended likewise that the triglyphs of the Doric order represented the ends of the beams resting on the architrave. But they were invented by the Egyptian architects, or sculptors, who never employed wood; and the Greeks have only added the *gutta*, which do not seem very necessary. It is remarkable, that among all the ruins of Egypt, no columns have been found with vertebræ alternately of black and white marble. Yet the Egyptians certainly esteemed greatly such particolored buildings, although their effect must be truly disagreeable. But we should always remember, that the eyes of the inhabitants of the East are very different from ours.

Only one instance presents itself, where the trunk of the palm-tree might really have been used as a model for columns. This was to satisfy the taste of *Pharaoh Amasis*, who caused many wonderful works to be constructed in the town of *Sais* only a few years before the fall of the Egyptian monarchy. Hence we may perceive, that the passion for building never diminished in that country, where the heat of the climate, and the fertility of the soil, naturally inclined mankind to idleness. Aristotle justly suspected that
the

the priests did not wish the people to remain inactive *. Independently however of all political motives, they seem to have been persuaded, that exercise was necessary for the preservation of health among men subject to the leprosy; and frequent festivals were instituted to prevent their toils from becoming insupportable. In a climate so ardent as that of Egypt, this management was very proper; although not at all calculated for colder regions, where the bodily forces are much less exhausted in an equal space of time. If all the colleges of Egypt really testified their discontent against king *Cheops*, it was not surely from any disgust at the pyramid he erected, but because he forced the people to work on holidays. Yet the whole recital of that affair, given by Herodotus, seems to be a pure fiction; contradictory of all ideas we have received concerning the government of Egypt, which was much less despotic than modern authors pretend. It is ridiculous to hear them acknowledging, that, in a free country like England, no person would ever think of rearing pyramids; while we know, that the cultivation of the earth requires nine times more labor there than in Egypt. If exact lists could be procured of all the British subjects, who perish at sea either by shipwrecks or other accidents, we should find that navigation destroys more men in one year, than perished in many centuries by erecting the pyramids. As agriculture did not afford sufficient employment for the Egyptians, who had neither a marine, nor any exterior commerce, it was necessary to

* Aristot. de Republic. lib. v.

direct them to other pursuits. By reflecting on the flourishing state of their country under the Pharaohs, and the miserable situation into which it was reduced by the Christian emperors, and afterwards by the Turks, we cannot refrain from being persuaded, that the ancient government must have been better than some men of trifling genius pretend.

One event has been greatly exaggerated; and even allowing the whole to be literally true, we can only consider it as an accident altogether unforeseen. Pharaoh *Necho*, it is said, in causing a communication to be opened between the Nile and the Arabic gulph, occasioned the death of one hundred and twenty thousand men. But how can it appear probable, that so many should perish on this occasion, when Ptolemy Philadelphus completed a canal of the same kind in another place, without the loss of a single life?

Such popular reports may be accounted for in the following manner. The priests of Egypt disapproved highly of the project of joining the Nile with the Red Sea. They even published an oracle, to prevent Pharaoh *Necho* from his enterprize; because their exact local knowledge enabled them to foresee, that such attempts would be useless. The event justified their opinion, when Ptolemy afterwards endeavoured in vain to establish a harbour for the commerce of India, and the coast of Africa, in the place where his canal entered the Arabic gulph. It became necessary to form a port much more to the south; and thus the labor of cutting across the isthmus of *Suez* was entirely lost. Strabo certainly erred greatly, by affirming

affirming that large vessels, heavily laden, had navigated this cut; for we know that Cleopatra, at a crisis when her life and empire were at stake, could not pass there, even with light galleys. The Turks were made to believe, in our own days, that if they wished to obtain immense riches, nothing more was necessary than to open the ancient communication between the Nile and the harbour of *Suez*: but the person, sent to examine the matter, dissuaded the sultan from this absurd project. If a prince like Ptolemy, who already possessed one branch of the commerce of India, could not reap any advantage from this canal, what indeed might be expected by the Turks? They have there only twelve or thirteen vessels, and these never leave the Arabic gulph, but are employed in transporting certain productions of India to *Giddab*, whence Europeans bring annually to the amount of six or seven hundred thousand pounds sterling. Considering the losses of the Turks by shipwrecks in returning from *Giddab* to *Suez*, it is evident, that they would avoid much risk by discharging their cargoes at *Berenice*, and following the road by land, as was practised under the Ptolemies. Two tribes of robbers, or Bedouin Arabs, called *Beni-Wassel* and *Arabdé*, might indeed be tempted to lay the caravans under contribution; and as the Turks govern so badly the countries subjected to their sway, it is but just that they should experience those wrongs which they do to others.

To form an exact idea of the formation of the lake *Moeris*, it will be necessary to observe the map at the beginning

beginning of this volume, where it is placed to the north of the town of Crocodiles, or what is now called the province of *Feium*. Father Sicard erred egregiously in placing the lake too far to the south, and converting it into a long canal parallel to the bed of the Nile. Mr. D'Anville has unaccountably adopted the same arrangement, although in opposition to such geographers as Strabo and Ptolemy, as well as historians like Herodotus and Diodorus. The last of these writers says positively, that the *Meeris* was little distant from the town of Crocodiles * ; and this passage, which contributes to determine its real position, must have escaped the attention of Mr. D'Anville †. Besides, the inhabitants of the country assured Herodotus, that this lake communicated with the Syrtis of Africa by a subterraneous conduit, directed towards the west, and passing behind the mountains of Memphis. No other body of water answers this description, except that now seen to the north of the province of *Feium*; and as Ptolemy and Strabo speak with certainty, we may be assured, that this is the real *Maris*. Thus D'Anville's Egypt has one false indication, and the error is copied in his great

* Bibliot. lib. ii.

† This geographer wishes to prove, in his *Memoirs on Ancient and Modern Egypt*, that Herodotus and Diodorus, in speaking of the lake *Maris*, have taken the measure of the surface for the circumference. An error of this kind would be inexcusable in a child of ten years old. The Greeks could never be accused of such imbecility; but they were always notorious for their exaggerations.

map,

map, because he confided too much in the memoirs of Father Sicard, who was prevented by an untimely death from perusing ancient authors with sufficient attention. In consequence of such improper combinations, D'Anville's map points out two labyrinths, although one only was known to the ancients; and Egypt was certainly not the place to multiply objects without necessity.

At this day, the lake Moeris is thirty miles in length, and eight in breadth. That space is sufficiently extensive to admit of various conjectures from those who measure it with the eye only at different points of view. From east to west, it appears larger than reality; and proportionably smaller, when seen from north to south. As no naturalist has had an opportunity of examining it, we are at a loss to determine whether it should be considered as formed by the water of the Nile, which enters there, or, according to Strabo, as merely a vestige of the Mediterranean. Perhaps indeed the Egyptians may have labored to drain the province of *Feium*, or the Arsenoite Nome, which appears to have been anciently a marsh, as well as the *Delta*. Having succeeded in that undertaking, they conducted thither the fresh water, by cutting apparently seven mouths, by which a part of the Nile was discharged into the lake Moeris, in the same manner as into the sea*.

* Of seven mouths which belonged to the canal of communication between the Nile and the lake *Maris*, six can now be distinctly observed when the river overflows and the dykes are opened.

After

After these explanations, we see why the Egyptians could boast that this lake was produced by their industry. Considering the utility of the work, we willingly pardon their superstition, in supposing a connexion between the mouths of their canal and the number of the planets. We have no information whatever concerning the subterraneous communication of the lake Mœris with the Syrtis mentioned by Herodotus. As that Greek did not understand the Egyptian language, he was perhaps misled by the interpreters, and possibly alluded to what is called the *River without Water*, which some travellers are persuaded has never been produced by human labor. But the error of Father Sicard was occasioned by the mark of some great canal, or an ancient bed of the Nile, called *Batben* in the French maps, and in the German *Gara*.

The Egyptians were infinitely more expert at conducting water, or digging ditches, than erecting any superb and regular buildings. The great temple of *Heliopolis*, where neither labor nor expence was spared, could only be considered, says Strabo, as a barbarous fabric, destitute of taste and elegance. It is with architecture as with painting, sculpture, and music. The people of the East could never bring that art to any great degree of perfection; because their fancy was too unruly to be governed by fixed principles.

Count Caylus has asserted, that the architects of Egypt were ignorant of the method of constructing vaults; and Mr. Goguet wished to demonstrate this

beyond dispute, by engraving designs for the purpose, in his book on the Origin of the Sciences and Arts. Cornelius de Bruyn, however, having been enabled by means of flambeaux to obtain a drawing of an obscure gallery in the great pyramid, gives his opinion, that it was really a vault *. Pliny says the same of the inferior apartments of the labyrinth. Thevenot found likewise some caves, intended for mummies, formed in that manner; and finally, Pococke discovered an Egyptian arch in the province of *Feium*. Thus Mr. Goguet and Count Caylus do not appear to have examined these matters with sufficient attention. Indeed the difficulty of finding wood for scaffolding and frame-work, might have prevented the Egyptians from vaulting the great temples; or perhaps that mode of building was not considered by them as sufficiently solid, according to their ideas of indestructibility. Every person knows the extreme scarcity of timber in that country; and to lay flat stones on the tops of pillars required few scaffolds: but whole forests would have been necessary to raise a vault for the prodigious temple of Thebes.

The Egyptians were the first people who conceived the idea, that a whole country might be fortified like a citadel; and the great rampart of Egypt must be considered as much more ancient than that of Media. Sesostris, who has been so improperly considered as a conqueror, endeavoured to put his own kingdom

* *Reizen door klein Asia*. This traveller gives the name of *Gewelf* to the top of the gallery, and he would never have used that term without intending it to express an arch.

into

into a state of defence, by erecting a wall in an oblique line from the town of the Sun, situated without the Delta, to Pelusium. This distance amounted to fifteen hundred stadia of the smallest measure, or about eighty English miles; and the pretended hero was chiefly desirous of preventing the shepherds of Arabia from invading Egypt, where their excesses were intolerable. What must be considered as very remarkable is, that the Bedouin Arabs, who encamp at this day so insolently on the ruins of Alexandria, have preserved the tradition of this great wall, so injudiciously constructed. It ended, as we have said, at Pelusium*; and when once an enemy got possession of that town, all the works of Sesostris were useless; because no obstacle afterwards remained in ascending the Nile, as we find by the successes of Cambyfes, and afterwards of Alexander.

This great rampart of Egypt has totally vanished, no person knows in what manner. We have reason however to believe, that it was levelled during the conquest of the Persians; for nothing of the kind existed in the reign of Artaxerxes *Mnemon*, when the Egyptians, supported by the auxiliary troops of Lacedæmon and Athens, made a last, but ineffectual effort to break their chains. Pharaoh Nectanebus

* Diodor. Bibl. lib. i. Egypt might have been more easily inclosed by building a wall from Pelusium to the town of Heroës. It appeared to me at first that the text of Diodorus was incorrect, and that Ἡρώων πόλις should be read instead of Ἡλιούπολις. Some considerations afterwards prevented me from adhering to that opinion.

then fortified anew the whole Pelusian branch of the Nile; and Chabrias, the Greek, who commanded under him, closed a second time the avenues of Pelusium by a bulwark called *Charax Chabria* *. But these works have disappeared, as well as those of Sesostris; and we only find them in history, as laid down in the map annexed to this volume.

Mr. Maillet pretends, that some traces are seen of another wall, upwards of twenty-four feet thick, constructed by the Egyptians in the Heptanomis †. This however is not mentioned by ancient writers; and it must be considered as rather suspicious; unless perhaps some such method was adopted to protect the plain now called *Araba*. That district might in reality have had cultivated lands, near *Alabastrinopolis*; where a defile between two mountains required perhaps to be defended.

This mode of inclosing a country with walls has been considered as the strongest proof of the resemblance between the Egyptians and Chinese. It will therefore be necessary to show, that the same idea occurred to all ancient polished nations, whenever they had for neighbours the Nomades, who never cultivate the earth, and are the scourge of civilized societies. Pastoral life has been considered by historians, who were not philosophers, as the real state of innocence; but it is, in fact, such an incitement to rapine, that the terms Nomades and robbers are almost synonymous.

* Cor. Nepos in Vit. Chabriae.—Strabo, Geograph.

† Description of Egypt.

One great wall, which, on considering the position alone, seems to have been judicious enough, was erected in the valley between the Libanus and Anti-Libanus, to restrain the Scenite Arabs. Although amazingly strong, this work was already so completely destroyed in the days of Pliny, that he speaks of it as a monument no longer to be seen; but we find it described particularly by Diodorus Siculus*.

The Hebrews likewise, however strange it may appear, undertook to build a wall of an hundred and fifty stadia, from the town of *Joppa* to *Antipatris*†. This rampart, like all the rest, was soon overturned; and the Jews, who pretended to defend it against Antiochus, suffered themselves to be defeated in a most shameful manner.

On the way from *Joppa*, along the coast of the Mediterranean, we find the great wall, which surrounded all the province of Pamphylia, and a part of Pisidia. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, some travellers, on their journey from Anthalia to Smyrna, discovered the wrecks of this vast bulwark‡, concerning which authors are so silent, that we neither know when nor by whom it was erected. Yet no doubt remains but the object was to protect Pamphylia against the Isaurians, who were ever averse to good order. Their mountains were naturally arid; and instead of endeavouring to improve the soil, they only thought of making incursions wherever any

* Plin. lib. v.—Diodorus, lib. xiv.

† Josephus, Ant. Judaic. lib. xiii.

‡ Spon, Miscell. erudit. Antiquit. sect. vi.

hope could be entertained of pillage. They were called the chief of robbers, in preference to the Jews and Arabs ; and in this profession they discovered almost as much expertness as the Algerines in piracy. The Romans chastised them repeatedly ; but they became again formidable under Valens, and his successors ; and we may therefore, without further details, consider this rampart as a work of the lower empire.

Passing thence into the centre of Asia, we find the great wall of Media, extending nearly from the Tigris to the Euphrates. Xenophon, the only person who speaks of it from his own knowledge, fixes the length at twenty parasangæ *. This does not agree with what we learn from Lucius Ampelius †, who is unpardonable in considering it as one of the wonders of the world. The height indeed was an hundred Grecian feet, and the breadth at least twenty ; but yet it had no title to be ranked among the greatest of all human productions. As the stones were cemented with bitumen, it was easy for enemies, by means of burning cakes of the same substance, to calcinate the places where they wished to open a passage. Artaxerxes, to prevent such accidents, caused large ditches to be dug before it, and filled with the water

* Retreat of the Ten Thousand.

† De Mirabilibus, cap. ix. The thirty Roman miles given by Ampelius to the wall of Media make only ten parasangæ. His text should therefore be changed to *sixty miles*, which are within thirty fathoms of the twenty parasangæ mentioned by Xenophon.

of

of the Tigris. Thus, to protect one very feeble work, he undertook another equally inefficacious.

These prodigious fortifications, now no longer visible, were intended to protect Babylon, and a part of southern Babylonia, against the inhabitants of the confines of Armenia and Mesopotamia. These could not however have been very numerous; for their mountains were no less sterile than those of Isauria; and perhaps the same race still exists, under the name of *Satchlis*, towards the *Sengar*. As the Greeks and Romans had the folly of attributing to Semiramis every thing of that kind beyond the Euphrates, they did not fail to give her credit likewise for the great wall of Media. Supposing this to be fact, it would of course follow, that the Assyrians, who then trembled before a small nation of savages, were not in a state to alarm all Asia with their numerous armies. But let it be remembered, that those, who wrote this history of Semiramis and the Assyrians, were not philosophers.

Previous to arriving at the *Van-ly* of China, two walls were formerly seen to the west of the Caspian sea: they formed part of a chain surrounding almost the whole of that extensive portion of the globe, called by us Tartary, but known to the ancients by the name of Scythia. Although both these terms are very improper, it is scarcely possible to express better a multitude of nations, almost without exception Nomades and wandering.

Amidst the sandy Hircanian deserts, the canton of Margiania enjoys all the favors of nature. Alex-

ander was so much charmed with the beauty of this delightful spot, that he resolved to found a city in its vicinity; and although death prevented him from executing his project, it was afterwards resumed by Antiochus, son of Seleucus Nicator. Experience, however, soon proved the necessity of protecting in some way or other the cultivated lands from the ravages of the Scythians; and he therefore surrounded the whole district with a wall fifteen hundred stadia in length. As that measurement cannot be calculated at less than one hundred and twenty miles, so extensive an undertaking is entitled to some attention in our present researches *. But when we add, that the town, founded by Antiochus, was afterwards repeatedly pillaged, and finally committed to the flames by the Tartars, it is almost needless to observe, that this bulwark resembled all the others by its total inefficacy.

Under the forty-second degree of north latitude, the great wall of *Hak* extended from *Shabaleg* to the extremity of the valley of *Alsbash*, a distance of more than twenty leagues. Little local knowledge is necessary to conceive that it was intended to prevent the robbers of Turkestan from annoying the town of *Toncat* and its neighbourhood, which, in the fourteenth century, was cultivated like a garden, and intersected by a thousand canals. Nature, says Abulfeda, is no-where more beautiful than in this charming spot, covered with flowers and fruits †. But it

* Strabo, Geograph. lib. xi.

† *Locorum omnium quæ Deus creavit, amenissimus*, says the translator of Abulfeda, Descript. Choras. & Mawaralnahræ.

must

must be owing to the visits of the Tartars that the vicinity of that town is now desert. Some other considerable cities of *Mawar-al-nahr*, such as *Samarcand* and *Bochara*, had likewise surrounded the whole of their cultivated territories by vast walls to a great extent. Agriculture was effaced wherever the pastoral hordes appeared. They made a practice of pillaging and destroying, to enforce their maxim, that possession cannot render lands a property. The fall of the empire of Tamerlane, who was very partial to *Samarcand*, occasioned the destruction of all the beautiful provinces situated beyond the Oxus, or Gihon. Nothing now prevents the Nomades from traversing them with their flocks; and the whole region contains only miserable wretches, who exist by mutual robberies. It is unaccountable that the Chinese emperor, *Kien-long*, was not tempted to take possession of so fertile a country, when, in our days, he advanced as far as *Badakchan*, and there terminated his expedition. This Tartar prince was erroneously represented in Europe as having extended his conquests to the Caspian sea; and Mr. Boyesen has inserted the same mistake in his extracts from universal history, although *Badakchan* is more than one hundred and fifty leagues distant from the Caspian sea.

Of all the barriers opposed to the irruptions of the Tartars we must allow that the Chinese wall is the greatest, and likewise the most feeble, because the strength of such lines diminishes in proportion to their extent. How could men, incapable of defending a redoubt, think of forming such prodigious

ous lines, which, if penetrated in any one place, became totally useless? In its origin, the *Van-ly* of China was very different from what it appeared afterwards. Some independent princes raised walls in various places, to break the impetuosity of the Tartar cavalry, without considering that a triple row of palisades would have proved far more effectual, as we find to be the case along the *Zeang-tong*. It has been said, and believed in Europe, that the emperor *Schi-chuan-di* undertook and executed the whole work in the course of five years; but this is a vulgar report, unworthy of the smallest degree of credit. *Schi-chuan-di* was not yet born, when the princes of *Tzin*, having fortified a part of the province of *Chen-si*, were imitated by the princes of *Tchao* and *Yen*, who covered in the same manner, but more strongly, the provinces of *Chan-si* and *Pe-tcheli*. The bad chronology and disorder of the Chinese books will not allow us to fix the precise period when the first labors of that kind commenced there; but it is supposed to have been about three hundred years before our era*.

All the princes we have mentioned were really independent sovereigns, who admitted no superiority even in the emperor. As they consulted only the safety of their particular states, no general plan was pursued, and many interstices remained among the

* What Mr. de Guignes says of the construction of the Chinese wall, in the *History of the Huns*, is not exact. He confounds the emperor *Schi-chuan-di* with another prince of *Tzin*, who reigned at a much earlier period.

different

different ramparts. Yet the whole of this undertaking, however it may be considered, tends to prove, that, under their reign, the state of population was flourishing, and the government far more moderate than the oppressive despotism of the Chinese emperors.

The monster *Schi-chuan-di*, in defiance of all laws human or divine, destroyed entirely these independent sovereigns, and he afterwards united the different works they had raised against the Tartars. This chain was uninterrupted, unless by groups of rocks, until it reached the borders of *Chan-fi*. Although the great wall is generally computed to be five hundred leagues in length, yet it really does not exceed three hundred and forty; because we cannot consider as such the branch extending westward from *Chan-fi*, where earth only is employed, without either brick or mortar, and the sides so ill secured that even cavalry can effect a passage. Thus we find how much it falls short of the idea generally received in Europe, where no copies have hitherto been obtained of the inscriptions said to be found there. The missionaries pretend, that in the province of *Chan-tong* likewise certain characters are discovered on the side of mount *Tai-chan*, which no person can explain: but something of the same kind, seen on the rocks of Siberia, is not considered as a monument of great antiquity*.

On

* Strahlenberg, Observat. With regard to the nine marble drums which Father *Mailla* says he found in the college of Peking,

On considering attentively the *Van-ly-czin*, called hyperbolically by the Chinese the Wall of ten thousand *lys*, it is evident, that a more useless work was never reared by man since the beginning of the world. The western Tartars, by turning from the strait road, and inclining towards the fortieth degree, could at all times enter China, without perceiving either the terrace of *Chen-si*, or the great wall. Marco Polo went with a troop of Tartars to Pekin, returned into Italy, and died at Venice, totally ignorant of that rampart. This made some of the learned believe, that it had not been constructed until after the thirteenth century; for, according to them, the silence of Marco Polo was of more weight than the depositions of history.

Experience has taught the Chinese, that the Tartars cannot be restrained, but by having well-disciplined cavalry to dissipate the hordes, when they begin to collect in their own country. Whenever they are allowed to unite and conspire, all is lost. The emperor *Can-bi*, who was himself a Mandhui, knew this perfectly well, and on the least noise of war, he invaded the territory of the Eleuths, and prevented great battles by a few skirmishes. We have seen the emperor *Kien-long* imitating this conduct with equal success: consequently the *Van-ly-czin* is allowed to decay, as well as the wall of Corea; and in a few

Pekin, we have only to observe, that the superstition of the Chinese for the number nine might easily have induced them to hew as many pieces of stone in that form.

centuries,

centuries, even the ruins must disappear, or be traced with difficulty.

Russia, exposed nearly in the same manner to the Tartars, had recourse to similar means of restraining them, at a time when, so far from foreseeing its future grandeur, that nation almost despaired of safety. By one of those events, almost unexampled in history, we know, that the Moguls, in the thirteenth century, extended their conquests over the greater part of Asia and Africa. They subjugated China on one side, and Russia on the other, while the whole ancient continent resounded with the din of arms. In the year one thousand two hundred and thirty seven, *Bathi-Sain* entered Russia, at the head of what was called the *Gilded Horde*, from being covered with spoils. It was composed of chosen men, who thought themselves capable of extending in ten years their empire over Europe; but they were unacquainted with Germany, where their approach did not occasion so much terror as the monks and pope particularly experienced in Italy. The conduct of *Bathi-Sain* was perfectly conformable to that of his cousin *Koublai-Kan* in China: he caused several towns, and among the rest *Casan*, to be built along the Wolga*; but, instead of deposing the grand dukes of Russia, they were allowed, on paying a certain tribute, to preserve what was considered an empty title, and the shadow of authority. That unpardonable fault in politics ruined at length the sovereignty of the

* Versuch einer Historie von Kasan.

Tartars;

Tartars; who, besides, by requiring too great contributions in a poor country, excited so many revolts, that their reign was nothing but continual war. On the other hand, they weakened themselves by allowing small bands to separate from the great horde; for the trunk, instead of being fortified by such suckers, was exhausted. They lost successively the kingdom of *Casan* and *Astracan*; but they maintained themselves in the Crimea, where they afterwards acquired strength enough to undertake new excursions, and even to set fire to the city of *Moscow*. This new disaster induced Fidor Janowitz, or rather his tutor Boritz Goudnow, to fortify the limits of the empire. These works, apparently nothing more at first than a great ditch, like that seen in Africa towards *Thene*, were in time converted into a continued bulwark, extending upwards of one hundred and forty leagues, from *Toula*, in the government of *Moscow*, to *Sibiriski*, in the kingdom of *Casan*. Russia must have been still equally exposed to invasions, had not a prince at length succeeded so many Czars. Peter the First, instead of repairing the ancient rampart, defeated the Tartars, and contented himself with hemming them in with the lines of the *Ukrain*, which remain unimpaired to the present day.

The great route of the barbarians, in their excursions from what the ancients called Scythia, lay formerly between the Caspian and the Euxine seas. This suggested the idea of closing up all the defiles of mount *Caucasus*; and several vestiges of these walls
are

are still found in the district of *Souanis*: but the most considerable work ever erected in that part of the globe was the wall of Colchis. That province, now so desolate, received then all the merchandize of India. Such great riches, heaped up by the Phenicians and Greeks, who had vast marts for commerce established on the Phasis, irritated continually the covetousness of a barbarous people called *Acbas*, or some other term still more corrupt, by the French geographers. Their real name was *Awchafzi*, and they are even supposed to spring from the same stock with the *Afes*, who, under the direction of Odin, penetrated into Sweden, according to northern fables. The *Awchafzi*, however, always inhabited, and are still found between the mouth of the *Don* and the river *Corax*. They made their irruptions into the centre of Colchis, by passing along the shore of the Black Sea, and through the strait somewhat beyond *Petyunta*. At length this passage was closed by a wall, supposed to be the strongest ever reared by man, and therefore distinguished by the name of *Murus validus* *. But the *Awchafzi*, by directing their course to the left of this place, rendered its strength useless; and another wall was therefore opposed to them of more than one hundred and sixty miles in length. It might indeed be considered as one of the greatest undertakings of the kind, from being exceedingly well built throughout, and strengthened at equal distances with towers. Yet Chardin could no

* D'Anville's Ancient Geography, vol. ii.

longer

longer find even its ruins in one thousand six hundred and seventy-two, because they were concealed among impenetrable forests *.

Colchis exhibits one very remarkable circumstance : extreme despotism has reduced the inhabitants to a savage state ; and no other cause is capable of producing that effect on a people once polished. Even the dreadful black pestilence, and all the ravages of the Huns, never occasioned any thing of the kind in Europe.

The isthmus of the Taurica Chersonesus was anciently fortified by a ditch called *Taphros* in Greek ; and afterwards by a wall in the place where we now find the lines of the Crimea. When the Caspian barriers and those of Caucasus are added to the others already mentioned, we find that from the Boristhenes to the very extremity of the ancient continent, almost the whole of Tartary has been inclosed to the south by a prodigious chain of ramparts. They were evidently erected with the intention of restraining the inhabitants of that region, who passed them, however, as often as they thought proper. Although those people, truly remarkable on so many accounts, have had all the treasures of Europe and Asia in their possession, yet they never transferred any to their own country ; because their leaders either perished amidst the torrent of their conquests, or established themselves in the regions they had subdued. The Romans, on the contrary, filled

* Chardin, vol. i.

the capital of Italy with the spoils of the universe; and what occasioned their weakness, was long the support of the Tartars, who are now in a more critical situation than ever was experienced by any nation. These unfortunate people can now scarcely breathe, from being pressed together between China and Russia, the two greatest empires ever known on our globe. But the project of depriving them entirely of their horses is impracticable; although it is said to have been proposed by the Mandhuis to *Kien-long*, in order to render the Tartars for ever incapable of what they call brilliant expeditions.

Fortified provinces in ancient Europe were likewise very numerous; and although they did not equal those of Asia in extent, they may at least be compared to them for their inutility. The Athenian colonies, sent into the Thracian Chersonesus, under the conduct of Miltiades, closed up the Isthmus by a wall called *macron teichos* *. It reached from Paçtya to Cardia; and in the Periplus of Scylax, the distance between the two towns is laid down at forty stadia. This work, having been partly ruined, was repaired and augmented by two branches, of which no traces can now be found.

After all the pains taken in ancient times to open the Isthmus of Corinth, a plan totally opposite was at length adopted, and Manuel Paleologus constructed across the neck a very thick wall, on which the safety of the Greeks was supposed to depend. It might

* Herodotus, lib. vi. Pliny, lib. iv.

indeed have answered some purpose, had they discovered more bravery, and made better dispositions; but by concealing themselves behind this rampart, they were prevented from fighting; and afterwards it impeded their flight. The Turks never made more prisoners in one day than when they forced the lines of the Morea; and although the Venetians were laborious enough to rebuild this barrier, it was soon after destroyed a second time by the Ottomans. If the interests of the Venetians required the Isthmus of Corinth to be shut, the Turks had at least equal inducements to keep it open.

We have now to indicate the third *macron teichos*, or the long wall of Anastasius, formed about twenty-five or thirty miles in front of Constantinople. Zonaras says, that it began at Selymbria*; but the ruins still seen, extend from a little beyond Heraclea to Dercon, and thus all the country between the Propontis and the Euxine sea was inclosed for a distance of four hundred and twenty stadia. An ecclesiastical writer, named Evagrius, insinuates that, behind this bulwark, a canal was dug to convey vessels along the continent from the one sea to the other. Constantinople, says he, formerly situated in a peninsula, became in this manner an island†. The man however appears too injudicious for any dependance to be placed on his testimony. Nothing could be more humiliating to the eastern empire than this mode of defending its capi-

* Annal. in Anastas. Dicor.

† Evag. lib. iii. Suidas, and Nicephorus, lib. xxxix.

tal against the Bulgarian, Thracian, and Scythian cavalry. But Anastasius had no horsemen capable of opposing those of the enemy; and to preserve Constantinople, he was forced to abandon all his European territories, except the small spot within the great wall. Every thing beyond it was at the discretion of the barbarians, who had long before cleared the passes of mount Hæmus; and the *macron teichos* no longer remained, when the Turks came to besiege Constantinople.

Such, even in the beginning of the sixteenth century, was the state of that empire, which seems to have passed through all the different degrees of decay; and no power was ever more regularly destroyed. The sciences were lost first; then the arts; military discipline afterwards; and finally every thing that resembled force or conduct. But what never ceased in those unfortunate times were enormous taxes, and religious disputes, which contributed greatly to throw all parts of the government into a disorder, hitherto unexampled in history.

Some vestiges of a fourth *macron teichos*, still more extensive than that of Anastasius, are found in Bulgaria, near a town called *Drysta*. But we can only learn, from the style of architecture, that it must have been raised by some Greek emperor, who opposed this barrier in vain to the inundations of barbarians. It is not surprising that so little should be known of a monument of this kind in a savage region, when a total ignorance prevails relative to the wall of Valais. Many considerable fragments of

that fabric are seen still between the Rhone and Burgberg; but no person can determine whether it was built before the days of Cæsar, or only in imitation of the rampart he employed so ineffectually against the Swifs: to me however the former opinion seems highly improbable.

Much confusion likewise appears in what has been written concerning the different works of this kind constructed by the Roman emperors in Great Britain. Even the authors of that country are not all of the same sentiments; but we shall endeavour, in a few words, to remove some of the principal difficulties. Agricola, who knew the island perfectly well, was persuaded that nothing was more necessary than to keep possession of a pass, thirty-two miles across, between the river *Clyde* and the *Firth of Forth*. Adrian, however, instead of adopting this plan, chose another place eighty miles broad; and it should be observed, that the military mile is estimated there at four hundred and twenty feet more than on the continent. Thus the Romans began by constructing a *vallum* of piles and fods, twice longer than was necessary. This rampart proved ineffectual: another, built by Antoninus Pius, was soon destroyed; and a third, by Severus, shared the same fate. At length, under the reign of Valentinian the third, Ætius, conceiving that all these works had failed from the nature of their construction, caused a real wall twenty feet thick to be erected. But to prove how much he was mistaken, this rampart had not been finished five years before it was forced, first at one place, and after-

afterwards every-where. Buchanan assures us, that the ruins began to be found only in his day ; and they are at least so far useful, that they now serve to build houses*.

By these and many other facts, we find that the origin of the power of the barbarians should be dated in the reign of Adrian, when the fortifications raised against them revealed the secret of their force. In proportion as the Romans intrenched the limits of the empire, their military discipline declined ; and the same effect must have been observed in every country inclosed by walls, without even excepting China. Thus all the bulwarks, raised in Great Britain, were less effectual, as we have seen, than the judicious posts and encampments of Agricola.

The Romans constructed likewise a great wall in upper Germany, equally faulty, and as difficult to be defended as that of China. D'Anville's map of ancient Germany makes it begin opposite *Ober-Wesel* ; and after placing many interstices, the strongest part is represented to have been at a spot where the emperor Valentinian raised some works on the lower Necker. This arrangement, however, cannot be adopted ; for the line was certainly uninterrupted, and equally fortified in its whole extent. Mr. Hanselman, who has given a good description of this work in German, says, that the tradition of the country states it as having been commenced in the reign of Adrian, and continued by his successors. The last branch, which stretched towards the Danube, was added by Probus,

* Buchanan, lib. iv. Polydor. Virgil, lib. i.

as some medals of that prince testify beyond a doubt *. It began on the banks of the Rhine, opposite Bingen, where the Romans had a fortified camp ever since the time of Augustus: thence it passed into the county of Solms, forming an elbow to approach the Mein; and continuing through the forest of Otton, or Odenwald, it crossed the county of Holach, touched the Necker, stretched to Hall in Suabia, and taking the direction of Eichstadt and Weissenburgh, terminated at Pfeurring in the territory of Ratisbon. Thus no passage was left open in all the vast space between the Rhine and the Danube; and, from the ruins still found, we have reason to believe, that this rampart contained entire citadels, and numerous towers, strongly fortified. The Romans were obliged to give it so winding a course, in order to cover the territories of some nations, such as the *Mattiaci*, with whom they were strictly allied. But even by being constructed in the shortest line possible, it could not have answered the purpose of restraining the *Catti*, and other German nations, styled wandering, because, having no country, they sought one throughout the whole world. Marching with their flocks, like the Tartars, they resembled them also in the astonishing facility with which they changed the pastoral for a military life. Germany had anciently many such hordes, who wandered about constantly,

* Dæderlein, Vorstellung des alten Römischen *Valli* und Landwehr, iii. Absch. The work of Mr. Hanselman may likewise be consulted; the object of which is to inquire how far the Romans had ever penetrated into Suabia, and high Germany.

and

and emigrated frequently. The settled cantons had no other means of defence in those days, against unexpected attacks, than by surrounding themselves with vast deserts; and this method, still practised in the time of Julius Cæsar, would have kept them always barbarians. But afterwards the Germans, having procured better instruments for cutting down the woods, and digging the earth, fortified themselves against each other by works called *Landwehr*. The idea of this kind of rampart is supposed to have originated in Gaul; although it was generally practised among all nations, when they began to cultivate the earth regularly in those countries, where their neighbours continued to be wandering.

It will be sufficient here just to mention a *vallum Romanum*, extending from *Widdin* to *Little Waradin*, and some other mounds of the same kind, constructed by the Goths, who, of all the barbarians at that time, inclined most to civilization. In the north of Europe, we find the *Danewerck*, raised by the Normans, when they began to be known by the name of Danes. To prevent the incursions of the Saxons into Jutland, they endeavoured to shut up the passage by a terrace, extending to the shore of the Baltic; and on this very dike, Waldemar the Great constructed a wall, which is less injured at the present day, than could well be expected.

Such is the history of the greatest and most useless works ever reared by man on the surface of the ancient continent.

THIRD PART.

SECT. VII.

RELIGION OF THE EGYPTIANS.

THE religion of ancient Egypt is a real abyss, where many writers have been swallowed up in attempting to sound its depth. Such numerous and different superstitions, which sometimes are altogether inexplicable, can never admit of being reduced to any particular system.

Van Dale had reason to believe, that the sacred animals were instituted in Egypt for the purpose of divination. Yet, if we except one obscure passage in *Ælian* relative to crocodiles, nothing is known with certainty of any other oracles, than those of the bull *Apis*, which comprehended every thing, although they were originally confined to the overflowing of the Nile. On this point the Egyptians have at all times testified the greatest inquietude, without considering that other animals were as ignorant of the matter as themselves. The crocodiles are said to deposit their eggs beyond the reach of the inundations; but this is a vulgar opinion, adopted only in some towns situated on the branches of the Nile.

Nile. Naturalists believe that the hippopotamus gives surer indications; because the inhabitants pretend to have observed that when, previous to the floods, it frequently appears on shore, the river always rises sufficiently afterwards to water the lands. The Copts, however, at this day employ no animal in their prognostics on the state of the Nile; and yet their ceremonies for that purpose, during which even the Turks assist at mass, are fully as superstitious as the mode of interrogating the bull Apis. When that animal refused to eat, the omen was not less fatal than the abstinence of the sacred chickens, which were consulted by the Romans on great affairs, while matters of little consequence could be decided by crows. If Juvenal had been judicious enough to reflect on this, he would not have written his satire on the Egyptians; for the difference between supposing a calf or a chicken acquainted with future events is surely not very material.

By all that has been collected in this Section, respecting the worship offered to scarabees, it appears that they likewise served for auguries; and we must suppose those insects at least as well informed in such matters as the priestesses of Delphi; for whom Plato testified so much regard. This was in consequence of his being persuaded that no civilized nation can have a reasonable religion; and the same sentiment seems to have prevailed among all the legislators of antiquity. We shall see presently, that this false and whimsical opinion was founded entirely on the supposed danger of making innovations in the religious practices,

practices, which had been received from the savages of the country, or, as Plato styles them, the indigenous inhabitants.

The greater part of the religious ceremonies of the Egyptians came from the savages of Ethiopia, as Diodorus says in the most unequivocal manner; and the fact is of a nature not to be doubted. Yet no person has hitherto ever undertaken to seek in Ethiopia the origin of a worship, evidently invented there. Mr. Jablonski was perfectly capable of making such researches, the result of which would have been infinitely more satisfactory than the conjectures he has hazarded, and the contradictions he could not avoid.

At the article *Phtha*, he describes the Egyptians as atheists, whose system resembled too exactly that of Spinoza, for any person to be deceived, who had the least penetration.

At the article *Cneph*, or *Cnuphis*, he changes the same Egyptians into deists, who admit of an intelligent Being distinct from matter—the Sovereign of Nature.

Mr. Jablonski, who had much good sense, and still more erudition, would surely have reasoned in a different manner, had he been less connected with La Croze, who, by the confession even of his panegyrist, became a mere visionary in the decline of life, without any signs of the little judgment he formerly possessed. That man, bred a monk, flattered himself greatly on his penetration in discovering atheism every-where; and he fancied he had found it in the wretched

wretched Latin verses composed by a fool, called Jordan le Brun, who was committed to the flames by some villains in Italy. It is madness, or at least imbecility, to accuse whole nations of atheism, when they produce a few bad metaphysicians, who by means of certain subtilties lose themselves in a cloud of ideas; and their absurdities discover impertinent reasoners, rather than atheists seriously determined on maintaining their opinions. Those, who adopt systems without knowing the objections they may encounter, would do better to remain within the limits of incertitude.

Ancient historians and geographers unfortunately give us very little information concerning the Ethiopians. Yet the few notions we have been able to collect, are sufficient to explain several difficulties, and render the way less obscure. In the first place, it appears certain, that, with regard to religious matters, they always remained closely connected with the Egyptians. They came annually to carry the shrine of Jupiter Ammon from Thebes to the limits of Ethiopia, where a solemn feast was celebrated, which certainly gave rise to the singular tradition of the gods coming to eat at the Heliotrapeze, or the *Table of the Sun* *. When Homer assures us, in the *Iliad*, that Jupiter went frequently into Ethiopia, to assist at a great festival, we may suppose the poet informed of this ceremony †. Herodotus has erred in placing the *Table of the Sun* at Meroe, although Solinus sup-

* Diodorus, lib. ii.—Eustat. in *Iliad*.

† Lib. i.

poses

poses it to have been still more towards the south. The whole procession required, as we are told, only twelve days, in going and returning by a different road from that which extended along the east bank of the Nile; and it is impossible to perform the journey in that time by the shortest way from Thebes to Meroe. The latter place had, however, a temple dedicated likewise to Jupiter Ammon*; and this fact tends also to prove, that the religion of the Egyptians and of the Ethiopians was originally the same. Among the former, indeed, some changes had been introduced in the course of many centuries; and the most important of all related to the immolation of human victims. Heliodorus, although a great admirer of the Ethiopians, admits that they sacrificed boys to the Sun, and girls to the Moon†. The colony sent by them into Egypt, continued likewise to slaughter strangers, or men with red hair, on the tomb of Osiris, or the stones consecrated to the Sun; and women were most probably sacrificed to the Moon, in a small town called by the Greeks *Ilithya*. Some remains of that place are still found on the right bank of the Nile, near a spot known by the

* Plinius, lib. vi. cap. 29.

† *Æthiop.* lib. x. Heliodorus says, that the Ethiopians sacrificed strangers only who were taken in war; and although the gymnosophists reprobated such sacrifices, the people persisted in offering them. The Greeks imagined that the Egyptians immolated red-haired men in the town of Diana, or *Ilithya*: but, in my opinion, it is more probable that they sacrificed women.

name

name of *El-Kab*, not more than twenty-four leagues from the confines of Ethiopia.

Mr. Jablonki was therefore wrong in supposing, that these atrocities had been borrowed from the shepherd Arabs. They were at length totally abolished in the reign of Pharaoh Amasis; while the famous law for burning heretics alive, was not repealed in England until the time of Charles II. The history of Egypt has never since afforded any instances of that nature: but in Ethiopia it was more difficult to reform religion, because the civil laws had less power over the people, who were frequently dispersed either in hunting, or wandering with their flocks in search of pasture.

The first gymnosophists of Ethiopia most probably were nothing more than wandering priests, like those still known in Africa by the name of *Marabut*. That word, literally translated, signifies *Child of the burning reed*; either because those impostors sometimes burn their victims with reeds, or perhaps in allusion to their pretending to vomit fire, while they conceal kindled tow under their garments. An example of this was seen in one thousand seven hundred and thirty-one; but executed in so awkward a manner, that negroes only could have swallowed the deception. When a nation has no other than wandering priests, it is easy to conceive, that among the numberless different superstitions introduced there, some must of course be contradictory; because opinions not being reduced to any body of doctrine, each juggler endeavours to advance his own.

Boulainvilliers says, that among people like the shepherd Arabs, the idea of a God Creator must have been longest preserved in all its purity *. But he knew nothing at all of the ancient Arabs, concerning whom Sale has procured explications, which prove that their notions of the Divinity were very degraded. This indeed must have been the case, because each tribe multiplied the number of Fetiches and Manitous, of which the sacred animals of Egypt and Greece are the remains. For it might be proved, if the thing appeared of sufficient consequence, that the Greeks were likewise greatly attached to the worship of animals: they revered, to a certainty, about twelve or thirteen different kinds, without including the weasel of Bæotia.

The spirit of the gymnosophists did not begin to be developed until they were united in a sedentary body, or college, principally stationed at Meroe. They then began to apply themselves to study, and place some order among the Ethiopian hieroglyphics: but unfortunately the treatise written particularly on that subject, by the philosopher Democritus, is entirely lost †. No person should be tempted to credit such extravagant praises as those lavished by the Roman writer Philostratus, on the gymnosophists ‡. Yet it is possible, that in laboring to compile their hieroglyphics, they might have invented the syllabical alphabet, used at this day in Abyssinia and Nubia,

* Life of Mahomet.

† Apud Lærtium.

‡ In vit. Apollon. lib. vi cap. 6.

whither

whither it could not be brought from any other country *. That discovery was the more interesting, as without it literal characters could never have been invented. It is a strange folly in Plato to accuse the priests of Egypt of having injured irreparably the sciences, by inventing the art of writing. According to him, it tends prodigiously to weaken the memory ; and Julius Cæsar seems inclined to support this prejudice, when speaking of the Druids, who surely never got any thing by heart but absurdities.

Although some passages are found in Diodorus and Strabo, relative to the opinions of the gymnosophists concerning the Divinity, yet it must be confessed that they are very obscure. They seem founded entirely on the authority of some Greek merchants, who about the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus began to penetrate into the centre of Africa. We know nothing more with certainty, than that they acknowledged the existence of a God Creator, incomprehensible by his nature, but visible in his works, which, according to them, are equally animated with the divine spirit. From this doctrine proceeded the symbolical worship adapted to the genius of the Africans, whose ardent imagination required to be fixed by palpable objects like the Fetiches, and their anxiety concerning futurity, calmed by auguries. The Greeks and Romans consulted the oracles every in-

* Herodotus observes, in his fourth book, that the Ethiopians used two very different characters. The first consisted of hieroglyphics, from which those of Egypt were copied ; the second we may suppose to have been a syllabical alphabet.

stant

stant merely from habit ; but among the Africans, that custom seems to have been a physical want peculiar to warm climates, where the minds of the common people are extremely weak and impatient. In Europe it is remarked, that women in general are much more eager after predictions than men ; while philosophers, undisturbed at the idea of what may happen, correct or support bad fortune.

Many natural reasons explain why oracles have ceased in some places of ancient Europe and Asia ; but they can never be abandoned in Africa. Two are known at this day on the western coast, which are as famous as ever could have been that of Delphi. By an unpardonable ignorance of modern history, both Van Dale and Fontinelle have been led to admit, in favor of their adversaries, that all oracles are now really silent. This falsity, however, is demonstrated by the narratives of travellers, who are now living, and particularly by Romer.

When Pliny and Solinus say, that some cantons of Ethiopia had elected a dog for their king, it can only be understood, that they rendered worship to that animal, of which we have seen many examples among the Egyptians their descendants. The information of the ancients concerning the interior of Africa, was certainly more extensive than ours ; but on the other hand the coasts are much better known to us ; and all the nations there, without exception, revere serpents. The inhabitants of the kingdom of *Judbac* worship one species, which seems to have no noxious qualities ; and it is even supposed to destroy
some

some small black-colored adders, said to be venomous : but other negroes have converted real vipers into *fétiches*, although their bite almost invariably occasions death. In general, the adoration paid to serpents is founded on the fear naturally entertained by mankind for those reptiles : such as are dangerous, it is supposed, should be conciliated ; and the others seem to merit a peculiar distinction, as if a genius, friendly to humanity, had taken care to disarm them ; and this class has principally been used for prognostication. The omens were considered favorable when the Isiac serpents tasted the offering, and dragged themselves slowly round the altar. But it must be observed that some of those reptiles attach themselves like dogs to their masters, and learn different tricks, which are never after forgotten : thus we may, with some certainty, suppose, that the serpents of Isis were taught to obey the voice or gestures of the ministers. The *Gneph*, or divine goodness, was represented by an innocent adder ; and strength or power, by a viper. The priests of Ethiopia, as well as those of Egypt, wore the figure of the latter coiled up in their bonnets of ceremony ; and we have already had occasion to observe, that the diadem of the Pharaohs was likewise ornamented with this emblem*.

The worship rendered to serpents was not confined to particular towns of Thebais and Delta ; for Ælian

* *Sacerdotes Æthiopum et Ægyptiorum gerunt pileos oblongos in vertice umbilicum habentes, et serpentibus, quos Aspidēs appellant, circumvolutos.* Diod. lib. iv.

assures us, that they were kept in all the temples of Egypt *: this seems the more probable, because it was one of the most ancient, or perhaps the first superstition of the inhabitants of Africa, where the largest adders were carefully collected for the temples of Serapis: some of those brought by the Ethiopians to Alexandria were twenty-five or twenty-six feet in length; but they are found of more than twice that size in Senegal.

The want of documents prevents us from entering into further discussions concerning the particular devotion of the college of Meroë: we know, however, that it terminated in the most fatal manner, from having constantly opposed the progress of despotism—that ancient malady of sovereigns. Ergamenes, the tyrant, who was cotemporary with Ptolemy Philadelphus, and a Greek by origin, is said to have caused all the gymnosophists to be massacred in one day; and this threw that part of Ethiopia into a state of desolation, whence it has never since recovered. Some ruins only are found of *Axum*, *Pfelches*, and *Naphthe*, where some years ago the Jews, it was said, intended to form a state independent of the Turks and Abyssinians. This report, however, has not been confirmed; and indeed they are to be considered as not only incapable of executing, but even of meditating such a project, for they know no other heroism than usury.

The philosophers of Ethiopia, like those of Egypt, most probably clothed their knowledge in allego-

* De Nat. Animal. lib. x. cap. 31.

ries : on this must have been founded the fable related by Plutarch, concerning some towns and villages situated near the island of Elephantis, which Pharaoh Amasis promised to cede to the king of Ethiopia, if his gymnosophists succeeded in explaining certain enigmas. The Ethiopians, he adds, hazarded some of their territories on the same condition : but although we read other such stories in the writings of the amplifier Josephus, and in the life of Æsop, composed by a fool called Planudes ; we must not be tempted to believe that the sovereigns of antiquity were so easily disposed to sport with their dominions : Egypt in particular was too small to be dismembered for an enigma, particularly by such good neighbours as the Ethiopians, who never attempted to turn aside the course of the Nile, concerning the possibility of which more shall be said in the Section on Government.

After what has already been observed, it would be superfluous to refute the many different systems proposed, ever since the days of Isocrates, on the origin of the worship rendered to animals. We find that the Egyptians, instead of being the inventors, had brought that custom with them from Ethiopia, where it seems to have originated with the serpents, and the small bull, supposed to be the *bubalos* of naturalists. This animal, the dwarf of its species, has horns resembling those of the moon ; and the imagination of the Africans has frequently been struck by similitudes much less obvious. The colony of Ethiopians, who took possession of the valley of the Lower Nile, in-

stead of renouncing, became more than ever attached to such superstitious practices, when they remarked the utility of the cat, weasel, ichneumon, sparrowhawk, vulture, screech-owl, stork, and ibis. It was absolutely necessary to put such animals under the particular protection of the law; otherwise the country would have been altogether uninhabitable. The Turks, who do not pretend to be idolaters, are as careful in preventing the ibis from being destroyed as the Greeks and Romans. Whatever may be the religion of those who shall in future possess that country, they will always continue to respect those animals, so justly named the purifiers of Egypt.

It has always appeared unaccountable to the ancients, as well as to the moderns, that some towns should have adored crocodiles. Cicero is the only person who supposes that this was in consequence of their utility*; but he would have been much embarrassed to explain in what consisted this advantage, so inconceivable to much more able naturalists. In the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy, having been particularly engaged in studying the topography of Egypt, it first occurred to me that Cop-tos, Arsinoe, and Crocodilopolis the second, the towns most remarkable for the adoration of crocodiles, were all situated on canals at some distance from the Nile. Thus by the least negligence in allowing the ditches to be filled up, those animals, from being incapable of going far on dry land, could never have

* *Possent de ichneumonum utilitate? de crocodilorum, de felium dicere; sed nolo esse longus.* Cicero de Nat. Deorum, lib. i. cap. 36.

arrived

arrived at those three places, where they were considered as the symbols of water fit for drinking and watering the fields, as we learn from Ælian, and more particularly in a passage of Eusebius*. As long as this worship was in vogue, the government might remain assured that the superstitious would not neglect to repair the canals with the greatest exactness. In the same manner every dependance could be placed on the Oxyrinchites for preserving the great canal, now known by the name of *Kalitz il Menbi*, on which depended the arrival, among them, of the sacred fish called *oxyrinchus*. Two other towns, indeed, Crocodilopolis the third, and Ombos, had likewise their crocodiles : Mr. d'Anville hesitates in fixing the position of Ombos, but he should have placed it further inland, towards the foot of the Arabic heights, for we know that the inhabitants had dug vast ditches for watering their plantations†. It is therefore easy to conceive why the people of the Arsinoite Nome, or the province of Feium, had a crocodile called *Suchu*, or the just, ornamented with golden ear-rings and bracelets, as we learn from Strabo. That lizard was to them not the emblem of Typhon, as some have believed, but of the water on which their existence depended, so entirely, that they

* *Per hominem crocodilo impositam navem ingredientem ; navemque significare motum in humido, crocodilum vero aquam potui aptam.* Euseb. Præpar. Evan. lib. iii, cap. 11.

† Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. x. cap. 21. The situation of Crocodilopolis the third is not known; but from what we know of the other towns, which had the same name, it cannot be supposed to have been on the banks of the Nile.

could not have subsisted six months if the canals towards *Illabon* had been neglected. It is probable that the Arsinoites endeavoured to draw some auguries from their sacred crocodiles, relative to the future overflowing of the Nile, because they were still more interested in that event than those who lived in the towns along the river.

We have already, in another part of this work, attempted to explain what might have been the object of the worship offered to the squill, or sea-onion, by the people of *Pelufium* and *Casium*, some of whom were attacked with a swelling of the tympanite kind, and a delirium called *typhomany*, which, as the term denotes, was an Egyptian disorder. It is surprising that saint Jerome, when speaking of this extension of the intestines, did not perceive that it produced those effects, which he endeavoured to render ridiculous*. It would certainly have been more reasonable to pity unfortunate people, labouring under natural infirmities, produced by the fogs of the lake Sirbon, which are said to be no less noxious than those of the lake Asphaltis, or the Dead Sea, particularly during the heat of summer. Mr. Pococke, who visited the latter in April, found himself afflicted with a weakness of stomach, and an excessive dizziness, from having neglected, as he was told by the people of the country, to use sufficient precaution against the vapors. When the Arabs pass near that vast river, where the water is so thick that it prevents

* *Taceam de formidoloso & horribili cepe, & crepitu ventris inflati, qui Pelusiaca religio est.* In Isai. lib. xii.

animal

animal bodies from sinking, they cover their mouths, and breathe only through the nostrils.

Among the superstitions of the Egyptians, some at first sight seem unaccountable, such as their devotion to the shrew-mouse: it was revered in the town of *Atribis*, and embalmed after death in a sepulchre for the purpose at *Buto*, although the distance between the two places was more than fifty miles. The eyes of that little animal being almost as much concealed as those of the mole, Plutarch pretends, that the Egyptians, believing it to be entirely blind, fancied in this some similitude to the diminution of light in the waning moon, and to the *Athor*, or the attribute of the Divinity personified under that name, which was, in fact, the incomprehensibility of God, compared with the darkness of night and of chaos. But before any such forced and complicated references were invented, some much more natural property must have been discovered in the shrew-mouse. It has always appeared to me that the Egyptians, like the Greek naturalists, considered that animal as belonging to the class of weasels*, which received equal protection with the ichneumons. The latter, we know, were consecrated to the Egyptian Hercules, who was the same divinity with the Hercules of Thebes, in Beotia; but as Greece pro-

* The Greeks gave the name of *weasel-mouse* to the shrew-mouse, because they conceived it partook of the nature of both those animals. This was certainly a more proper term than that of *mus-araneus*, which was used by the Latins, for it had some resemblance to the weasel and none at all to the spider.

duced no ichneumons, the Thebans made no difficulty of supplying their place with weasels; and although Greeks, says Ælian, they are not less ridiculous for adopting such an absurd devotion*. The inveteracy of the weasel towards rats and mice made the Egyptians place that animal under the protection of the law; and finding something of a resemblance, however trifling, in the shrew-mouse, they were led to imagine all the symbolical doctrine already mentioned.

Some sacred animals possessed only enigmatical and augural properties, in whatever manner they are considered: such was the scarabee, dedicated to the sun, and very different from the ugly insect mentioned by Pliny. From the description given by Orus Apollo, who says it resembles the sparkling lustre of the eye of a cat in the dark, we may conclude that the Egyptians had taken, for the symbol of the sun, the great golden scarabee, called by some the cantharides. This insect is frequently seen in gardens, where it feeds on ants and small worms; when the light falls directly on the shield of its wings, it has perfectly the appearance which the Latin translator of Orus Apollo calls, *radiis insignita*. The other scarabees of Egypt were the monoceros, with one horn on its corselet, and the horn beetle with two, which it shuts like pincers. All the superstitions, relative to these three insects, were considered as very ancient; and they appear to have been common to the Ethiopians, and other inhabit-

* *Thebani, quamvis natione Greci, risu sunt obruendi; qui mustellam, ut audio, religiose colunt.* De Nat. Animal. lib. xii. cap. 5.

ants

ants of Africa, even before Egypt was inhabited *. Some traces of the same worship are found, not only in the holy cricket of Madagascar, but likewise among the Hottentots, who, as we read in the General History of Travels, look with veneration on the persons over whom either the scarabee with golden rays, or the horn-beetle of the Cape, chances to pass, because they consider it as a fortunate omen. What appears still more surprising is, that the same prejudices, with regard to the scarabee, have been introduced into Europe, where it is called by the vulgar, the *Fly of the Lord*. This superstition could not have proceeded from the writings of St. Ambrose, because they are never read by the common people, who must, therefore, be ignorant that he has frequently compared the Messiah to a Scarabee, without leaving us even the shadow of a conjecture on what such a strange comparison could be founded. In many places of Europe the song of the cricket is likewise considered as propitious; and many persist in preserving these insects, although their shrill and monotonous noise is almost insupportable, when they become very numerous. Whatever may be the devotion of Europeans towards crickets, it does not equal that of the Africans, who make a living by rearing them; and the rich would think themselves at enmity with heaven, if they did not preserve whole swarms in ovens, constructed expressly for the purpose. It should be constantly re-

* Scarabees are, even now, seen sculptured on stones in the royal sepulchres of *Biban-el-Moluk*. We have already observed that those monuments are more ancient than the pyramids.

membered,

membered, that the minds of the lower class of people are liable to be forcibly struck with trifling matters. Not many years ago the French peasants began to render a kind of religious worship to the chrysalis of the caterpillar, found on the great nettle, because they fancied it revealed evident traces of the Divinity. M. des Landes assures us, that the curates had even ornamented the altars with these maggots ; as grasshoppers and canary sparrows are kept in cages in Spain to sing during the celebration of mass*. If the imagination of man can be carried to this point in our temperate climates, can any person be surprised that the Africans, whose fancy is exalted by the fire of the atmosphere, should discover some resemblance between the horns of the moon and those of the *bubalos* ; or between the horn-beetle and the zodiacal Bull ?

In the monuments described by Montfaucon and Count Caylus, the Egyptian women are seen feeding the scarabees on tables, or altars. This probably represents the real mode of drawing auguries from those insects, which were treated nearly in the same manner with the chickens at Rome, in the ceremony of what Cicero calls, the *tripudium*, and *terripavium*, in his second book on divination. However whimsical those practices may appear, they do not equal the mode invented by the Chinese for consulting the tortoise, which is one of their greatest oracles. That superstition surely was not derived from the Egyptians,

* Recueil des differents Traités de Physique, and Baretti's Letters on Spain.

for the tortoise has never been even mentioned among their sacred animals; yet all attempts to ascertain exactly the total number, have been hitherto ineffectual; and the researches of Mr. Blanchard, inserted in the ninth volume of the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions*, are altogether imperfect and inconsistent. We shall, however, indicate here nearly all that can be known of that matter from ancient authors; and, after having spoken of the objects of symbolical worship, we shall endeavour to develop the real sentiments of the Egyptians concerning the essence of the Divinity.

In a burgh, situated at the northern extremity of the lake Mareotis, a sacred bull was fed; and although many other towns of Egypt practised the same devotion, yet the names of Hermonthis, Heliopolis, and Memphis only, are recorded. The reputation of the bull *Apis* eclipsed that of all the others, as soon as the court of the kings was transferred to Thebes; but in other respects the Egyptians had as great veneration for the environs of Memphis as for those of Abydos. The learned cannot agree on the term fixed for the life of *Apis*: Plutarch pretends that he was drowned at the age of twenty-five years; and this, according to him, agreed with the number of characters contained in the Egyptian alphabet: but Mr. Butter, who succeeded in finding out the Egyptian letters, by studying the fillets of the mummies, asserts, that they did not exceed twenty-two. It is probable that *Apis* was destroyed as soon as his appetite and vigour flagged under the pressure of age, because in that state he could
not

not give favorable auguries, the only service required of him by the people. It may be presumed that the *pullarii*, attached to the Roman legions, prevented, in the same manner, the sacred chickens from living beyond a period prescribed by certain rules of the aruspices. The Egyptians drew prognostics also from the voice of children, who sang and played in the procession of Apis, or at the door of his stall. Mr. Jablonski observes, that the oracle of the Jews, known by the name of *Bat-Kal*, or *daughter of the voice*, appears to have been the same with that of the children in Egypt, who became prophets before they were men.

Several towns of that extraordinary country, such as Momemphis, Chuse, and Aphroditopolis, kept sacred cows; but the common burying-place of those animals was at Atharbechis, whither their bones were brought in boats. Cats received almost exactly the same treatment; it was unlawful to kill them in any part of the country, and when dead they were buried at Bubastus. Bears had likewise their sepulchre, probably at Papremis, a town dedicated to Typhon, or the evil principle, who was supposed to be calmed by having worship rendered to the hippopotamus, the true symbol of the typhonic spirit. That animal, so far from coming at the present day to Old Cairo, never descends below the cataracts of the Nile, and it was by mere chance that one was taken at Damietta, after having lost itself in following the course of the river. In ancient times the race must have been much more numerous than at present; and we find lions
and

and tygers diminishing in the same manner. This is likewise supposed to be the case with the crocodiles of the Nile, for they certainly never show themselves now in those places, where Seneca says they were very abundant in his time*.

It seemed, indeed, as if the Egyptians had intended to make their country the receptacle of beasts; and yet they did not possess so many different kinds as Cicero intimates. In the first place, those used for burden, like the dromedary, the camel, and the elephant, were excluded, as well as all solipedes; for the horse was never admitted among the *fetiches*, and the Egyptians always discovered a great antipathy to the ass. This has been ascribed to its skin, which is generally red in that country, where all animals of that color were supposed to contain the essence of some distemper: in fact, the Egyptians conceived it to be incompatible with a good constitution; and although their naturalists have been turned into ridicule on that account, even by M. Montesquieu, their opinion is certainly more and more confirmed, at least with regard to cattle.

It is remarkable that the same animals were generally consecrated in two different towns; as we find to have been the case with lions, dogs, rams, and wolves. Ælian pretends that the inhabitants of the great Lycopolitan prefectory took care to pluck up entirely that species of aconite, vulgarly called *wolf's-bane*, lest it should injure any of the objects of their

* Nat. Quest. lib. xiv. cap. 2. It must, however, be supposed that Seneca was well informed.

vene-

veneration. This story, however, is truly ridiculous, when we reflect that the Lycopolitans never permitted the wolves to run at liberty in their provinces: those animals did not exceed in size the common house-dog, and some well-preserved mummies have proved their characteristics to be very different from what they are described by Herodotus.

The weasel was revered principally in Thebais; the ichneumon, or the rat of Pharaoh, in the towns of Hércules, supposed by some geographers to have been three; the shrew-mouse at Atribis and Buto; the antelope at Coptos; the buck-goat at Mendes, Thmuis, and probably also at Panopolis: the otter, although never tamed, was apparently privileged throughout the whole country. The two towns of Mercury had cynocephali, or papions, which, as well as the monkey Cebus, seen in the Babylon of Egypt, about two leagues above Memphis, were brought from Ethiopia.

Epiphanes speaks of a chapel where ravens were fed*; but this must have been a tomb near the lake Mæris, which, according to the tradition of the country, contained the body of a bird of that species, employed by an ancient king in carrying letters. No other conveyance of letters was known in Egypt than by means of pigeons; and the origin of this expedient is lost in the night of time: we find it mentioned as a very common thing in the verses of Anacreon, who practised that manner of sending billets, which were no doubt worthy of being

* In Ancot. tom. ii.

carried by the favorite birds of Venus*. It is not amiss to observe here, that the observations in Mr. Mallet's work, relative to the custom of employing pigeons in literary correspondence, is extracted from some Arabic authors, who have evidently exaggerated; and their testimony besides is of no weight, with regard to the distant periods to which we now allude. Diodorus Siculus informs us, that the government of Egypt sent letters to every town in the whole kingdom, announcing the increase of the Nile—the measurement could only take place at the three Nilometers; and as pigeons were so numerous, from their being the chief food in times of the plague, it seems natural that the Egyptians should have preferred them for conveying speedy information; besides, it was difficult for those messengers to lose their way there, because, in proportion as they ascended in the air, they saw themselves surrounded by the sea, and vast deserts of sand.

Two towns, known by the name of Hieracopolis, fed sparrow-hawks; but a different species, brought from Ethiopia, and not hitherto ascertained by naturalists, was consecrated in the temple of Phylæ. The eagle was revered in Thebais, and the screech-owl at Sais; the vulture, the ibis, the tadorne, the stork, and the puet, were universally sacred, although they had no temples; while Arnobus assures us, that some chapels were dedicated entirely to scarabæes†.

* Ode ix.

† Arnob. adversus Gent. lib. i.

The perch, or the fish called the variole, was held in great veneration at Latopolis; the carp at Lepidotum; a town of Thebais; the pike at Oxyrinchus; the sea-bream, or reddish-sparus, at Syene; and the meotis in the island Elephantis: but the characteristics of the latter are not known, any more than those of the physa, which seems to have answered likewise some superstitious purposes. The Greeks, however, were greatly mistaken, when they considered the eel, because not eaten by the Egyptians, as belonging to the sacred fishes: many things prohibited by the dietetic regimen must not be counted among the number of *fetiches*; but worship was certainly paid to serpents at Metellis, in Lower Egypt, and probably at Terenuthis. All the temples contained, indeed, different kinds of reptiles, the most remarkable of which was the horned adder, revered in some parts of Thebais; and, according to all appearances, in the island of Elephantis, as well as at a little town called Cnuphis, situated towards the twenty-fifth degree.

The history of the sacred plants of Egypt has always been very obscure; and we only know that great veneration was testified there for the nymphaea, the poppy, the olyra, the papyrus, the squill, the absynth of Taposoris; and, as Vestling says, wild mustard. To these were added, the persea, different kinds of palm-trees, and the acacia, which probably gave rise to what is said in the history of Barlaam, relative to a worship rendered by the Egyptians

to

to thorns *. This pretended devotion extended probably no further than to adding some branches of acaſia, when the firſt fruits of the earth were carried in proceſſion: nothing of that kind was ſeen in the interior of the temples, where ſtatues, or human figures, were very rare; and little elſe was ſeen than ſome animals, a few vaſes filled with the water of the Nile, and lamps never permitted to burn out. By means of the perpetual light in the temple of Jupiter Ammon, ſeveral attempts were made to aſcertain the duration of ſome celeftial revolutions; but, as the ancients themſelves perceived, they could never produce any advantage.

Such is the enumeration of the fetiches, among which the Egyptians ſought all kinds of ſimilitudes with the ſtars, the moon, the ſun, and the attributes of the Divinity: their objects conſtituted, in general, the ſymbolical worſhip, ſo improperly confounded with idolatry. The Indians, likewise, were conſidered in Europe as idolaters, while we had to depend entirely on the aſſertions of miſſionaries and travellers; but their books, when tranſlated, proved how much they had been miſrepreſented. We do not pretend here to ſpeak of the populace of India, for they, like the common people of Egypt, went aſtoniſhingly aſtray; but if ever fanaticiſm was its own puniſhment, it muſt be in the caſe of the Hindoos: they ſubmit

* *Ægyptii coluerunt cattum, et canem, et lupum, et ſimiam, et draconem, et aſpidem. Alii ſepas, et allia, et ſpinas. Ad calcem Oper. Damas.*

to the most rigid sorts of penance; but the severest of all, according to their own confession, is the performance of a pilgrimage to the pagoda of the Great Lama, where they can arrive only by traversing, during thirteen or fourteen months, the most frightful deserts, at the mercy of the Tartars and beasts of prey; those, who are more devout than the rest, continue their journey into Siberia, to visit the *kutuktus*, or particular bishops; and thus such wretches are found carrying their provisions on their backs from Calicut to Selinginskoi, in the fiftieth degree of north latitude. Until more information is acquired, relative to the motives of these prodigious journies, it will be difficult to persuade me that the religion of Hindostan is not derived from that of the Lamas.

However warm climates in general may tend to affect the human heart with superstition, yet that influence is peculiarly remarkable in Egypt: the priests do not seem to have had any interest to increase the perverse genius of the fanatics; because they possessed a fixed revenue from lands, which were ceded to farmers at a very trifling rent, and consequently not subject to variation. From this were deducted the sums necessary for repairing the temples, procuring victims, and defraying all the expences of sacrifice. They should not, therefore, be compared with those infamous vagabonds in Italy, who, borrowing their name and character, begged in the streets of Rome, from the second hour of the day to the eighth, when they returned to shut the temple of Isis. Such conduct

duſt would not have been permitted in Egypt among the vileſt claſs of men, much leſs among the prieſts; for no beggars were tolerated by the law.

When the members of the ſacerdotal order enjoy a certain income, and are prohibited from begging, they muſt ſurely be intereſted in maintaining the eſtabliſhed religion, whatever it may be: But no inducements remain for introducing new ſuperſtitions, which muſt appear to them as more dangerous than uſeful.

The partition of lands in Egypt has always been conſidered as an eſſential defect in its political conſtitution. Diodorus pretends, that one third part, amounting to fix hundred and fifty ſquare leagues, was in poſſeſſion of the ſacerdotal claſs; and as an equal portion belonged to the military, and another to the ſovereign, none remained for the people. Yet this ſtatement could not have been exact; for the conquerors, called the ſhepherd kings, forced the people to give up their lands; and we know that they were afterwards reſtored on the expulſion of thoſe banditti.

No dependance can be placed on the opinions of Herodotus and Diodorus, with regard to the real principles of the government of Egypt. The conſtitution had been certainly changed ever ſince the days of Sethon, who ſpread ſo much confuſion round the throne, that no medium could be found between extreme liberty and exceſſive ſlavery. As all monarchical ſtates have ſome degree of ſplendor under their firſt deſpots, before they ſink into eternal ob-

scurity; in the same manner did Egypt appear brilliant for an instant before its fall.

Mr. Schegel, known by his learned Commentary on the work of the Abbé Banier, supposes that each Egyptian priest possessed only twelve *arouræ*, which do not amount to the same number of acres. Were our modern bishops and rulers of monks reduced to the same quota, so far from riding in their carriages, they would scarcely be able to purchase shoes. Some authors, like Pierius, have supposed that the laws of Egypt did not permit the sacerdotal class to keep horses; and the regulation of Moses might perhaps refer to that particular disposition: but many of the learned are of opinion, that it related only to the climate of Palestine, which was peculiarly unfavorable to those quadrupeds. At all events, as his intention was evidently to change a race of shepherds into husbandmen, he acted wisely in prohibiting horses; and indeed a more effectual plan could not be devised for reforming the morals of the Bedouin Arabs, whose high-bred mares are to them what ships are to the Algerines.

It must be acknowledged, that we are at a loss to determine the real division of lands in Egypt. By making each portion in the sacerdotal order amount to twelve *arouræ*, the same inconvenience arises as in the military distribution, where, according to Herodotus, the quota of the general was not greater than that of the private soldier; and this can never be credited. The sovereign, or the state, had to pay a certain sum in money or grain to those priests who were

were sent to Thebes for the administration of justice. From this we may infer that the produce of their lands was not very considerable, particularly for married men; and no others, it appears, were ever admitted to the exercise of public functions. In this, at least, a few traces are seen of what some have affected to call the wisdom of the Egyptians. Their priests, besides being magistrates, had the inspection of the laws, archives, historical records, public education, composition of almanacks, astronomical observations, surveying of lands, measurement of the Nile, and, finally, every thing belonging to medicine, salubrity of the air, and embalming. Thus, including their wives and children, they amounted perhaps to one seventh part of the nation. Very erroneous ideas, concerning that body of men, are formed by those who compare them to the clergy of any country in Europe, where seven or eight convents of monks sometimes possess more revenues than the whole sacerdotal order of Egypt. Yet the latter performed continual labors; and being subdivided into different classes, each had particular occupations. The first comprehended the prophets, who presided at the tribunal, where their decision was given without speaking, merely by turning the image of Truth to one or other of the parties. If the representation of a superb monument of Thebais, inserted in Mr. Pocock's Travels, can be regarded as exact, the judge held that image suspended at the end of a kind of sceptre, and not hanging to his neck, as is commonly supposed.

The ancient Greeks had fallen into egregious errors, with regard to the signification of the word *prophet*, although it originated in their own language; and Plato took some pains to adjust their ideas. Those, says he, are truly ignorant, who imagine that the prophet predicts future events; for that belongs, continues he, to the *mantis* alone, and he is always a fool, a madman, or a maniac. From this it results, as Plato observes, that the prophet was nothing more than the interpreter of the prediction, and could not be the author; because it was requisite for him to be in his proper senses, which was irreconcilable with the spirit of prophecy. Thus the miserable being, qualified with the name of *mantis*, like the Pythia of Delphi, was nothing more than the instrument of superstition; for all depended on those who interpreted the oracle. If we read, that the Pythia sometimes received money to give favorable answers to one town in preference to another, it must not be believed that she alone was bribed, but all the troop of sycophants attached to the oracle of Delphi.

With regard to the Egyptians, Clemens of Alexandria points out positively what were the functions of their prophets. It was necessary for them to be well versed in jurisprudence, and to know exactly the whole collection of laws human and divine, inserted in the ten first canonical books, which were supposed to contain every thing relative to religion. Thus the prophets were not remarkable for being learned in profane science; while the sacred scribes, or hieroglyphmatists,

grammatists, from applying themselves to the study of history and natural philosophy, attracted great consideration, and were ranked before the astronomers and geometers, or arpedonaptes, who nevertheless belonged to the first class, as well as the hierostolistes*.

After these came the comastes, who presided at public feasts, the zacores, niocores, and the pasaphores, who took care of the temples, and ornamented the altars, the fingers, spragistes, physicians, embalmers, and finally, the interpreters. The latter appear to have been the only people capable of speaking a little Greek; for the other priests knew nothing but the Egyptian language, which differed very little from that of Ethiopia. During the conquest of the shepherd kings, it was found impossible for those who spoke only Arabic, or the Phenician language, to make themselves understood by the Egyptians. This observation, as well as many others, tends to prove the error of those who imagine Egypt to have been peopled by Arabs, who had passed the strait of Babel-Mandel. In that case, instead of being so very different, the Egyptian language must have remained a dialect of the Arabic.

With regard to certain monks called *Sanfes* and *Renobotes*, said to have lived in Egypt many centuries

* Aulus Gellius, and Macrobius, attribute great skill in anatomy to the Egyptians. They pretend that their priests of the first class were consecrated by rubbing balm on the ring-finger of the left hand, the vein of which they believed came directly from the heart.

before the existence of Christianity, and even prior to the invasion of Cambyfes, we may venture to assert, that the whole is a fiction; because no such drones are mentioned by any of the Greek authors, who ever wrote concerning Egypt. Neither can we suppose, that a class of men could have remained in that country, who, belonging neither to the clergy, the military, nor the people, must have been more expensive than all the other sacred animals together. It was in the time of confusion occasioned by the despotism of the Roman emperors, that Egypt first became a prey to legions of cenobites; and that plague alone proved more fatal than all those recorded in the annals of the Jews*.

Although Mr. Schmidt has published a very learned Dissertation on the priests of Egypt, it must be remarked, that an essential particularity, forming one of their exterior characteristics, has escaped his attention. They carried, in the same manner as the kings, a sceptre exactly in the form of a plough†. This custom seems to have been taken from the ancient gymnosophists of Ethiopia, who asserted, that the first alimentary grain was found near the cataracts of the Nile; and it is said that a species of

* The first Christian monks of Egypt were called, in the language of the country, *Sarabait*, which signifies people disobedient to the magistrates, according to the interpretation of Bochart. The word *Remobotes* is perhaps a corruption of *Remaites*, which seems likewise to denote factious people.

† *Sacerdotes Ægyptiorum et Æthiopum gerunt sceptrum in formam aratri factum, quo reges etiam utuntur.* Diod. Sicul. lib. iv.

wild

wild spelt really grows in that neighbourhood. The learned have had opportunities of seeing frequently the aratriformed sceptre of the kings and priests of Egypt on different monuments, and even in the hands of the mummies, without knowing it to be such. Mr. Cleyton makes it an instrument altogether ridiculous *, and Father Kircher, the most unfortunate of men in his conjectures on hieroglyphics, supposes it to be an alpha. Indeed the Theban plough has some little resemblance to the letter A; but he should have perceived that this was not the first of the Egyptian characters; for we know that they began by the *thoth*, in honor of the genius who presided over sciences. These sceptres, in the form of a plough, are much less disgusting than the long nails of the Chinese; and it might appear extraordinary that the Egyptians should have taken from an instrument of that kind the chief emblem of royalty and priesthood, were we not assured of the great respect they always preserved for agriculture. Even their gods are represented cultivating the earth, and toiling in the fields, according to that allegorical style which has been the source of so many fables; and thus Osiris was said to have constructed his own plough, and opened the first furrow †.

Egypt contained four choniathim, or celebrated colleges: that of Thebes, where Pythagoras studied;

* Journal from Grand Cairo, written by the Prefetto of Egypt.

† *Primus aratra manu solerti fecit Osiris,*

Et teneram ferro sollicitavit humum. Tibullus, lib. i.

that

that of Memphis, where Orpheus, Thales, and Democritus are said to have been instructed; that of Heliopolis, frequented by Plato and Eudoxus; and finally that of Sais. The legislator Solon visited the last, most probably with the hope of discovering some memoirs relative to the town of Athens, which passed among the Greeks for a colony founded by the Saïtes. As this college was less ancient than the rest, it had not the right of sending deputies to the great council of the nation at Thebes, where ten members from each of the other three, formed the tribunal of thirty, presided by a prophet, to whom historians have given the title of Archidicastes.

It is difficult to say in what manner the Greeks, who sojourned in Egypt, passed their time. Plato seems to have transacted commercial affairs; and they, in my opinion, interested him more than the study of the sciences, or the history of the Egyptians, concerning which he has given us scarcely any information, although he resided thirteen years at Heliopolis and Memphis. Yet the continental voyages of the Greek philosophers and poets have contributed more than any thing else to illustrate the history of that region. Without their aid, and the annals of the Jews, we could have known little of a country, where all the monuments are dumb, and not a single volume remains of the whole library of Thebes.

What Eusebius relates of a college at Alexandria, composed of priests who were all hermaphrodites, must

must be considered as entirely fabulous*. On the contrary, no person, who was born with any remarkable bodily imperfection, could be consecrated in Egypt; and the very animals, when deformed, were never used either for sacrifice, or in symbolical worship. Eusebius, pretending to praise Constantine, places boldly among his greatest actions the order given by him for slaughtering without mercy all those pretended hermaphrodites of Alexandria. Could this account be credited, it must increase our detestation of a monster who should have been long before tired with assassination. Nothing could be more absurd and cruel than to inflict death on women, who were unfortunately condemned by nature to a deformity not uncommon in Egypt; and, fortunately, we find no other ecclesiastical writer bearing testimony to this pretended murder. Constantine, however, acted with very little policy, in removing the portative Nilometer from the place where it was generally kept; and this inflamed still more the minds of the people, because they perceived that he acted in trifling matters from instigation. Whether that instrument remained in the temple of Serapis, or in a Christian chapel, did not affect in the least the overflowing of the Nile; but his conduct violated extremely those ancient usages, which some nations consider as their chief riches,

* In Vit. Constant. lib. iv. c. 25.—The Greeks of Alexandria professed a worship very different from the ancient religion of Egypt.

Conring has been more zealous than any other modern writer in combating the phantom of Egyptian wisdom. After reducing all the pretended philosophy of that country to a collection of gross opinions, he accuses the very physicians of holding a constant intercourse with demons, and of being utterly incapable of curing any disorder *. From this we may judge that Conring was not the greatest philosopher of his age; and by writing such palpable absurdities, he disgraced his own judgment more than the reputation of the Egyptians, who had besides to suffer the unjust imputation of atheism. This must be the case, it was said, because they give two sexes to each element, and conclude by their great maxim, that *God is all*. But in fact they never pretended that the elements could produce by their own inherent power alone. On reading attentively what the naturalist Seneca says on this distinction, we perceive that it was merely a vulgar method of expressing the difference between fire and light; between vegetable and mineral substances; between air in a calm and in an agitated state; between fresh and salt water †. However ridiculous this may appear at the present day, it was far from being such in those

* De Hermetica Medicina, cap. x. & xi.

† *Ægyptii quatuor elementa fecere: deinde ex singulis bina, marem et feminam. Aerem marem judicant, qua venetus est: feminam, qua nebulosus & iners. Aquam virilem vocant mare; muliebrem, omnem aliam. Ignem vocant masculum, qua ardet flamma, & feminam qua lucet innoxius tactu. Terram fortiozem, marem vocant, saxa cautesque; feminæ nomen assignant huic tractabili ad culturam. Seneca, Nat. Quæst. lib. iii. cap. 14.*

distant

distant times, when natural philosophy, like a child beginning to walk, made its first efforts to leave the cradle. The Egyptians thought to have done a great deal by perceiving that nature possesses four elementary substances. Their ideas on this point were infinitely more rational than those of the Chinese, who extend the number of elements to five, although they exclude the air; and as their imagination is heated, they pretend that their *bing*, or elements, are animated by five genii, who produce successively a dynasty of Chinese emperors. Thence, says Visdelou, proceeds that formula so common in their books: *Such a dynasty reigned by the virtue of wood; such another by that of metal, earth, fire, or water.* The yellow color would make us suppose that the Tartars are now considered as belonging to the earth; but Visdelou assures us, that their dynasty is believed to be produced by the genius of water. From this we may conclude, that the Chinese are the greatest metaphysicians in the world.

The axiom, *God is all*, has in itself no precise meaning; but, depending on interpretation, may be explained in very opposite senses. It seems therefore to be very improperly introduced as proving the atheism of the Egyptians. Yet all the efforts of Cudworth to justify them, although the case was not difficult, failed entirely, because he confided too much in those apocryphal works, known by the title of Hermetic Books, which are the confused and despicable forgeries of some Christians. Afterwards he applies to the authority of Jamblichus, who,
if

if he even had not been a fool or a visionary, could never be supposed to possess any knowledge of the Egyptian doctrine relative to the essence of the Divinity, when he mentions Osiris as one of the three chief gods, as Cudworth himself acknowledges *. This blunder enervated the force of all his other proofs; for Osiris, so far from being in the first rank of the gods, did not belong even to the second.

As Warburton believed that the unity of God was announced in the celebration of the mysteries originally instituted among the Egyptians, it resulted of course, that they could not be atheists. These mysteries became afterwards a branch of finance for the republic of Athens, where the admission was so very expensive, that Apulæus rallies Lucius with having frequented such ceremonies, until he had reduced himself to his only robe; and the priests advised him to part with that likewise, to be initiated anew †. This demonstrates that the work of Apulæus, supposed by Warburton to be an excellent apo-

* Cudworth, Syft. Intellect. cap. v. Jamblichus de Myft. Ægyptiorum, sect. viii.

† *Postremo jussus, veste ipsa mea, quamvis parvula distrata, sufficientem corrafi summulam, et idipsum præceptum fuerat specialiter.* Met. lib. xi.—This alludes to the mysteries of Osiris, celebrated at Rome. It is astonishing that Warburton should have made so little difficulty of believing that on those occasions even women and children were told that Jupiter Capitolinus was nothing more than a deified man, unworthy of their incense and victims. It is certain that the Jupiter Optimus Maximus was not by any means a deified man.

logy for the mysteries, was, on the contrary, a severe satire on those vagabonds, who passed themselves for Egyptians in Greece and Italy, where they were called ironically the terrestrial stars of the great religion. Those villains employed every kind of intrigue and profanation to obtain money from the devout, and they frequently succeeded in depriving them of their very clothes. Such was their extreme artifice, that they inspired the hearts of the common people with fanaticism, at the same time that they favored all their debaucheries.

It is no longer doubted that the Greek hierophants introduced by degrees great changes into the doctrine of the mysteries of Eleusinian Ceres. If it be true that, in the time of Cicero, they announced secretly all the gods of Paganism as deified men, they were greatly mistaken. But even supposing that this error was really inculcated among the Greeks, it did not in any way concern the true Egyptians, who never went to Athens to consult the hierophants concerning any point of their religion, the doctrine of which we shall now endeavour to explain. The attributes of the Divinity seem indeed to have been personified with them, but in a very different sense from that of the Indians, who attach themselves solely to the power of creating, preserving, and destroying, represented in the allegorical style by three distinct persons.

The Egyptians acknowledged an intelligent Being separate from matter, whom they called *Phtha*: this was the founder of the universe; the living God, whose wisdom personified had the name *Neith*, and the

the appearance of a woman issuing from the body of a lion. Thus the Grecian mythology described Minerva as the offspring of the brain of Jupiter; and little doubt now remains concerning the allegorical identity of *Neith* and *Minerva*. It is not necessary here to be very prolix in proving that the sphinx, the real symbol of the Divinity, never could have any reference to the overflowing of the Nile under the zodiacal signs of the lion and the virgin. Independently of many other reasons, it is evident that, in very remote times, the increase of the Nile did not take place under those two signs, even admitting them to be known to the Egyptians, which is far from being demonstrated. The zodiac, such as it now appears, is retouched and reformed by the Greeks, although sufficient traces of its origin remain, to prove that it was invented by the Egyptians. They marked that circle with twelve sections, and each of these being again divided into three, the whole subdivision amounted to six-and-thirty. The zodiac of the Chinese, called the *yellow band*, has always consisted of twenty-four equal sections; and as each of these is likewise subdivided into three, a totality is produced of two-and-seventy.

The doctrine of the Egyptians with regard to *Neith*, or divine wisdom, may be supposed nearly the same with that contained in the Hebrew parables attributed to Solomon, who had married a woman of Egypt, where many persons of the female sex had names derived from *Neith*, in the same manner that *Sophia* was introduced afterwards.

Divine

Divine goodness was the last attribute of the Supreme Being, personified among the Egyptians by the name of *Cnuph* *, a word famous in the Abraxes. Thus we find this doctrine very different from that of the Indians, with whom the Egyptians had only some exterior resemblance, which vanishes in a great measure, when submitted to particular examination. But they differ in every thing from the Chinese, who have peopled nature with genii, without establishing among them a proper degree of subordination. What has been mentioned here is sufficient to prove the illusion of Mr. Jablonski, when he pretended that the whole Egyptian theology was founded on the same hypothesis advanced by Spinoza, who, he fancies, must have read the Hieroglyphics of Orus Apollo. But surely nothing could be found there favorable to his principles; for that Egyptian, born at Philœnebyth in the Panopolitan prefectory, never speaks of the Divinity but as a Being distinct from matter. Yet, unwilling to trust to my own judgment, where the accusation was so weighty, and the subject very obscure, I consulted on this point, as well as on many others, my ancient and much-esteemed friend Mr. Heiming, canon of Cleves. That man, whose whole life has been dedicated to study, and who to great genius joins an amazing knowledge in

* Jamblichus has corrupted this word greatly, and Plutarch writes it *Cnepb*, which has since been generally adopted. The *Athor* of the Egyptians signified chaos in one sense, and in another the incomprehensibility of God, and his state prior to creation.

all parts of the sciences, was of opinion that nothing tends to prove that the ancient Egyptians were even inclined to atheism. We do not speak here of the common people, who in no country of the world ever adopted such systems; because they are connected with a kind of metaphysics exceedingly complicated, and destructive of all sound philosophy. Yet we do not pretend to insinuate, that the Egyptians did not fall into monstrous superstitions and errors; for even their very princes were silly enough to believe, sometimes, that they really beheld the gods*. Apparitions of that kind may proceed from a natural phenomenon, not unfrequent in any country, except perhaps under the frozen zone, and consisting in a false dream some instants before the real sleep begins. Persons in good health, whose minds are tranquil, and particularly children of both sexes, believe then to perceive heads generally without bodies, which move lightly from one place to another. Perhaps no naturalist or physician has ever examined why those images, preceding sleep for a few moments, always represent heads either of human beings, or sometimes of large animals. This may, perhaps, be occasioned by the relaxation of the vital spirits, when they begin to calm in the folds and meanders of the brain. The more ardent fanatics of Egypt might have taken

* History mentions two Egyptian kings, *Orus* and *Suphis*, who affected to contemplate the gods. The last of these is supposed erroneously to have been the author of a book called the *Holy Ambers*, that production related to judiciary astrology, which was much in vogue among the Egyptians.

this

this false dream for the apparition of some genius, especially as it preserved constantly the same form. At this day, the Turkish monks, and certain Arabs of that country, have invented a method of procuring visions. They begin by very long fastings, and afterwards pray aloud in some cavern or obscure place, until their strength is entirely exhausted. Thus a syncope is produced, during which they imagine that fire issues from their eyes; and many phantoms, either agreeable or disagreeable, dance before them. We can no longer doubt but this method was practised by the Christian monks of Ireland on those whom they conducted into a cave called the Purgatory of Saint Patrick; and Mr. Sinner was wrong in supposing, that it had any resemblance to the mysteries of Eleusinian Ceres*. Hunger principally causes the delirium of those unfortunate wretches, some of whom never recover; and yet we cannot lament their fate.

The diversity of the sacred animals of Egypt has made some ignorant authors of the present day suppose, that the fundamental principles of religion were not the same in the different provinces. But it is easy to perceive, that the symbolical worship was only secondary; and that all the animals were consecrated to the same divinities, afterwards introduced among the Greeks and Romans. Yet no person could think of asserting, that religion varied in dif-

* Essay on the Dogma of the Metempsychosis, and of Purgatory.

forent quarters of Rome, or of Athens, because he saw there the temples of Vulcan, of Jupiter, Minerva, and Apollo, to whom the wolf was particularly consecrated by the Egyptians*. That animal, however, was not more adored in the Lycopolitan prefectory, than the screech-owl at Athens, the eagle at Rome, the weasel at Thebes, or the mouse in Troas.

It might more justly have been asserted, that the four great colleges of Egypt did not always agree on several points of history, natural philosophy, and astronomy: that indeed appears well ascertained, and from it proceeded those contradictions so manifest in all the systems attributed to them by the moderns. Pythagoras, who studied at Thebes, seems to have imbibed two opinions composing a part of his secret doctrine. He maintained, in the first place, that the earth was a star, or planet; and, secondly, that it moved round the sun: both which opinions were afterwards taught by his disciple Philolaus. Another hypothesis, differing little from that of Tycho-Brahé, had its partisans likewise in Egypt. According to it, the earth was immoveable; but Venus and Mercury were said to turn round the sun; as we learn from the commentaries of Macrobius on the Dream of Scipio. Although those two systems seem somewhat contradictory, it is possible that they were admitted by different colleges at the same time. Thus all the difficulty is dissipated, and matters are reduced to this, that as every person had the

* Macrob. lib. i. cap. 17.

right of thinking as he pleased at Thebes, the same liberty was claimed at Heliopolis, Sais, and Memphis. If it be asked again, why Ptolemy rejected the movement of Venus and Mercury round the sun, in opposition to the authority of the priests of Egypt; we shall only beg to know, why Tycho-Brahé did not adopt the system of Copernicus. The ideas of man are frequently inexplicable: he sees the light, and directs his steps towards darkness.

Seneca supposes, without the slightest proof, that Eudoxus and Conon, during their stay in Egypt, had made inquiries into the sentiments of the colleges relative to the nature and theory of comets, without being able to discover any thing. In the first place, it is very possible that Eudoxus and Conon never once thought of such matters; but supposing them even zealous in their researches, they would probably have found opinions very much divided. Yet the principal points of cosmography were universally admitted, and the Egyptians did not dispute on the cause of eclipses, which they attributed to a shade, nor on the form of the earth, believed by them to be round*. If ever any communication had been open between that country and China, the pretended learned in the latter would not have been found, at the arrival of the Jesuits, making the earth square, and discovering so great ignorance of the cause of eclipses. They imagined in the firmament, says Father Kircher, some genius who placed at times

* Diogen. Laër. in Proem.

his right hand on the sun, and his left on the moon *. Then the drums and kettles were heard beating on every side; the most timorous concealed themselves in cellars; and the emperors frequently trembled on their throne.

It is easy to believe that, in Egypt, philosophical opinions never troubled public tranquillity, nor agitated the state; and we have shewn likewise, that the diversity of animals, consecrated to the gods, never occasioned any disputes between the different provinces, as long as that country remained under its own civil institutions. But when conquerors introduced new laws, and a police altogether defective, then indeed both hatred and jealousy began to appear, and the factions of the towns were dreadful. Warburton assures us, that history affords only one instance of that kind; but by a little examination he would have found at least four examples, without including the riot occasioned by that Roman, who had killed a cat, and committed most probably some other excesses against the established customs of the country. This was highly resented by the Egyptians, who always willingly risked their lives to obtain vengeance, and were remarkable for a singular obstinacy in supporting torture with patience †. The greatest torments frequently proved ineffectual in making them reveal a secret, or pay the tribute required by

* China Illustrata.

† *Ægyptios aiunt patientissimè ferre tormenta: & citius mori hominem Ægyptium in quest.ionibus tortum, animatumque veritatem prodere.* Ælian. Hist. Divers. lib. vi. Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxii.

the Romans, to whom they did not consider themselves at all indebted. Yet that obstinacy was extremely different from true courage, and still more, if possible, from what is called heroism.

Warburton maintains likewise, that the combat of the Tentyrites and the pretended Ombites was not the effect of religious disputes. It did not indeed resemble the religious wars in France and England, because only one man was slain: but yet we discover the same fanaticism, excited through interested views, not difficult to be detected, however apparently involved in darkness.

The disputes between the Cynopolitans and Oxyrinchites concerning their dogs and pikes, terminated in open war. The Romans, who had then many regular troops in Egypt, might easily have prevented those unfortunate people from proceeding to extremities. But they were allowed to fight, and when weakened by mutual losses, they received such cruel chastisements, that nothing seemed to them more desirable than peace. When we suppose that interested motives were probably concealed then under an exterior of religious zeal, it should be observed, that this opinion is supported by the testimony of Mr. Pocock, and other modern travellers, concerning the frequent combats of the Arabs, who now inhabit both banks of the Nile. Such riots among those Mahometans were never occasioned by the sacred animals, any more than the quarrels of the ancient Egyptians. Even in Europe, we find frequent enmities subsisting between towns situated near each other on opposite banks of the same river;

they cannot possibly be alike flourishing, and this inequality of fortune and power irritates the minds of the people. It was owing to the evidently corrupt text of Juvenal, that the false opinion prevailed of the Ombites having fought with the Tentyrites about their crocodiles. Tentyrus and Ombos were about one hundred miles distant, and therefore not likely to have great interests to promote under such vain pretexts. The dispute alluded to really took place between the Tentyrites and the inhabitants of Coptos. That town became exceedingly flourishing, when a way was opened from the centre of Thebais to Berenice; for all the productions of India, Arabia, and the coast of Africa, were brought thither on camels, and partly forwarded thence in boats to Alexandria. In this passage they had to pass under the walls of the Tentyrites, who had no share whatever in that commerce, although their situation must otherwise have been very prosperous, as we judge from the ruins still extant of their magnificent temples. Prior to the reign of the Ptolemies, when the Egyptians had no road in Thebais, nor any vessel on the Arabian Gulph, it was not possible to foresee, that Coptos, so far from the Nile, would one day possess the richest commerce in the universe. The unexpected good fortune of that town excited the jealousy of the inhabitants of Tentyrus; and we cannot be surprised that it produced civil war under the Romans*.

* Juvenal says positively that this dispute took place between the inhabitants of Tentyrus and Coptos:

Gesta super calida referemus mania Copti.

Although

Although the capital towns of the Cynopolitans and Oxyrinchites were upwards of twenty miles distant, yet their prefectories either adjoined, or had no other separation than the Nile. Cynopolis seems to have possessed little cultivated country; while Oxyrinchus was exceedingly flourishing, and its good fortune withstood all the dreadful revolutions of Egypt since the days of Cambyfes, until the Christian monks at length occasioned its total ruin. It was said to have contained at one time no less than thirty thousand of both sexes; but this must be considered as a gross exaggeration. The Abbé Fleuri should have exercised more criticism on what he copied from ecclesiastical writers, and particularly from Ruffin, concerning this dreadful scourge, which has desolated Egypt ever since the third century. By supposing that only one fourth of thirty thousand cenobites inhabited Oxyrinchus, then the metropolis of Heptanomis, the number would have been sufficient to depopulate the town, and reduce it to a wretched burgh, now supposed to be called *Babneshé*.

The first monks of Egypt, who replaced the Therapeutes, and copied many of their observances, inhabited the deserts, and labored for their sustenance. In that situation they should have been allowed to remain, instead of being introduced into towns, where their morals became corrupt, and their begging importunities intolerable. No other means, it would seem, could then be found of escaping such vexations than by turning monk likewise; and thus the monster, by consuming its own vitals in proportion

tion as its size increased, could not avoid destruction. Monastic orders are never nearer ruin than when they become numerous; because, like edifices without any foundation, although they may escape a few shocks, they must certainly be overturned at last.

The English acted wisely by not allowing more than one convent to remain in their whole country: but the Turks, who govern Egypt blindly, seem to rely on the Arabs entirely for extirpating the monasteries. It is certain, as Mr. Niebuhr insinuates, in his *Description of Arabia*, that a remarkable antipathy subsists between the Bedouins and the monks, who are generally very ill treated, when they fall into the hands of those enemies. They suffer frequently such sieges in their houses, that they become infected with the leprosy or scurvy, like sailors in long voyages from a scarcity of vegetables. At this day, about forty convents still remain without the walls of the towns in Egypt; and their number seems to decrease in the same proportion with the bishoprics. The latter, according to an ancient Greek catalogue, once amounted to eighty-two*; but they are now reduced to eleven, exclusive of the *Abouna* of Abyssinia, and another prelate who resides at Jerusalem, where his fate is not preferable to that of the other bishops who remain in Egypt. They are in general obscure men, and so very poor, that they

* This catalogue is indeed held very doubtful, because it calls *Scene Mandrorum* a bishopric. But that place, as well as others still more inconsiderable, really held that rank; and the greater part of the bishops of Egypt were only vicars.

scarcely

scarcely live; because the Copts, who do not exceed twenty-five or thirty thousand families, are incapable of maintaining and clothing them decently. These facts are sufficient to give some idea of the manner in which that unfortunate country is governed by the Turks,

It has been already observed, that the revolt of the Egyptians, who attempted to destroy the labyrinth, was likewise a religious rage of the most reprehensible kind. But that fanaticism broke out under the Romans at some period between the reign of Augustus and that of Vespasian, or Titus. Strabo speaks of the labyrinth, as having never received any injury; and Pliny mentions how much it suffered from those who inhabited the town of Hercules and its environs. By this we find, that the event took place later than the voyage of Strabo; and nothing but the inclination of the Romans was wanting to have prevented that disorder.

Some authors, too much prejudiced in favor of ancient Egypt, have vainly endeavoured to justify every thing, however vicious or absurd, appertaining to the worship of that country, which was the mother of the arts, and the school of superstition. According to them, religion in time changes so entirely, that even the shadow of its primitive form can no longer be discovered; but we find, on the contrary, that the great maxim of the Egyptian priests was to prevent all innovations in religious matters, and their disciple Plato imbibed that opinion so strongly, that he conceives no greater madness than

than to change any thing whatever in public worship*. All ceremonies and sacrifices, says he, whether adopted from the savages, or introduced by those who consulted the oracles of Delphi, Dodona, or Ammon, should be allowed to remain precisely as they are. Similar ideas are discovered in the preliminary discourse of Zaleucus and Charondas, as well as in the works of Cicero; and we are therefore led to affirm, that the most celebrated legislators of antiquity preserved invariably the same sentiments both in theory and practice. Solon, who reformed the whole republic of Athens, and pointed out even the proper places for bee-hives and water-pits, never mentions a single word concerning the religion of the Athenians†. We cannot consider, under that point of view, his laws and institutions to diminish luxury in burials; and this evil, so general in the whole world, should have been repressed at Rome by the vigor of the twelve tables: nothing, it is said, must more certainly destroy the power of the Tartars in China than their funeral expences, if some means are not adopted for restraining this species of ostentation, so common to all the ancient Scythians.

These details may serve to answer the inquiries of those who are astonished at finding some nations, in former times, uniting the wisest laws with the most

* De Legibus, Dial. v.

† Solon is said to have built a temple at Athens to the vulgar Venus, *τη πανδημω*. The fact however is far from being ascertained, and we cannot thence conclude that he introduced any reform into religion.

foolish

foolish religion. The greater part of their religious worship had been continued from savage life; and civil institutions, on the contrary, could be framed only in a state of civilization. When the maxim was established of admitting no innovations in such matters, many nations, otherwise very polished, continued to observe ceremonies invented by barbarians. The legislators we have mentioned fell into this error, because they made no distinction between the essence and mere accessory parts of religion: besides, as the laws rendered them odious to all the vicious, it would not have been prudent to increase the danger, by incurring likewise the hatred of the superstitious.

Pharaoh Bocchoris conceived the idea of removing the sacred bull, called *Mnevis*, from the town of Heliopolis, and by that means he lost entirely the esteem of the people, among whom such animals had been worshipped for a greater length of time than the Roman empire existed. *Apis* did not disappear altogether at Memphis, until the reign of Theodosius; and, according to Mr. Jablonski, the first had been consecrated one thousand one hundred and seventy-one years before our present era. Thus a regular succession had taken place during a period of at least fifteen hundred and fifty years: but we are induced to suppose it much longer, because Mr. Jablonski has been guided by the sentiment of Eusebius, and in such matters that of Manethon seems preferable*.

The dietetic regimen of Egypt was wholly relative to climate, and as most of the feasts and ceremonies

* Pantheon Ægyptiac. lib. iv. cap. 2.

were

were connected with agriculture, the overflowing of the Nile, or astronomy, the priests concluded that their worship, like nature itself, should be invariable. Besides, they saw the fields well cultivated, while good order and abundance reigned in the towns, and they concluded that a country could never have become so flourishing with bad religious institutions. But without citing any of the examples before our eyes, it is certain that antiquity presents a great number of very prosperous states, where the religion was nothing more than a tissue of absurdities and palpable chimeras. In such cases all the advantages enjoyed by the society should be attributed to the nature of the police and civil laws. It is not however the defective regimen of Egypt which should be blamed; neither do the feasts relative to agriculture deserve the animadversions of philosophers. Those usages, respectable in every point, are worthy of the highest praise. But the scandalous disorders committed in the Mendetic Nome; the worship of animals in general; the licentiousness introduced in the processions and pilgrimages; the cruel discipline of the devotees, and the indecencies permitted at the installation of Apis, excite abhorrence. When we add to these, and a thousand other superstitions, the excessive expences occasioned by the embalming of certain animals, it is impossible not to reprobate the oracle, which declared the Egyptians to be the *wisest of nations*, as Socrates was styled the wisest of mankind. The power of truth may have operated in favor of a philosopher; but this extravagant praise
of

of the Egyptians could only proceed from a sentiment of gratitude in the Greeks. They did not forget their being indebted to them for the arts and sciences; and scholars are inclined to believe themselves inferior in knowledge to their masters, even when they might well dispute the palm.

All the abuses we have mentioned prove, that the maxim of permitting no innovation in religious matters was false and pernicious; whatever may be advanced in its favor by Plato. The Egyptians at all events might have been allowed to preserve what was called the weeping worship, because gloomy people may require at times to be abandoned to their melancholy: but it was folly to let such men scourge themselves in the temples. Those who get so far beyond nature, instinct, and reason, are capable of any crime, and can never be restrained by civil institutions. Thus it is found in Italy, that the processions of flagellants are generally composed of the greatest villains.

The doctrine of the Egyptians concerning the future state of the soul appears to have been very complicated. Mr. Mosheim has even supposed that two opinions entirely opposite reigned there*; because he could not reconcile the sentiments of ancient writers, some of whom affirmed that the people adhered to the metempsychosis, while others denied the fact. But this contradiction, which certainly exists among

* Ad System. Intellect. Cudworth, cap. iv.—Servius, the Commentator of Virgil, attributes likewise a singular opinion to the Egyptians, which however is evidently false.

authors,

authors, did not exist among the Egyptians, who do not appear to have ever known in early ages the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. What we find advanced in the works of Clemens of Alexandria, Diogenes Laertius, Philostratus, and the Poemander of the pretended Hermes, originated entirely from Herodotus, who in that point has been greatly deceived. This cannot surprise us when we perceive the manifest errors adopted by the Romans and Greeks in writing on the religion of the Jews, to whom they ascribed different opinions totally unknown to that nation; and they could not have been actuated by any intention of rendering them odious, because that required no calumny. But their misrepresentations proceeded solely from the little pains taken by those writers to obtain information; and the Romans in particular were so ignorant in such matters, that they neither knew the history nor dogmas of Judaism, even when it was tolerated at Rome. Are we to be persuaded after this, that a man like Herodotus could not be deceived in writing the religious tenets of the Egyptians; especially as he knew nothing of their language, and had to consult interpreters, who, on the single article of the pyramids, amused him with such lies as can no longer be believed, even by children?

Those who adopt strictly the system of the transmigration of souls, like the Thibetans and Hindoos, take little pains about their dead bodies; they either commit them to the flames or to the earth immediately; while the Ethiopians and Egyptians did

did every thing possible for their preservation. On this account they held the sea in horror; for those who were drowned had but little chance of being embalmed. Yet as they continued to navigate the Nile, particular priests were appointed to drag for the carcases, and convert them into mummies at the public expence. This aversion to the sea was no inconvenience as long as the Egyptians neither had nor wished to have any fleet; but when other times brought different sentiments, it became necessary to mitigate that opinion, which was also adopted inconsiderately by the Greeks and Romans. Prophyry has preserved a prayer recited for the dead in Egypt*; and it proves to our satisfaction that the people of that country neither adhered in the least to the system of the metempsychosis; nor to that of fatality, which excludes all future rewards and punishments; nor to that called moral or real, where both are admitted. Plutarch gives us to understand clearly that those people were mistaken who believed that human souls passed into the bodies of sacred animals; and that opinion was attributed with as little foundation to the Egyptians, as the adoration of swine and asses to the Jews. Had the Egyptians thought like the Bramins on all those matters, they would not have fed on the flesh of animals, nor immolated bulls, calves, goats, sheep, and many other victims which the Bramins dare not eat, and

* De Abſtinentia ab Animal.

much less slaughter *. Any act of that nature, besides future punishments, would entail on them the ignominy reserved for the *poulichis* and the *patiah*, concerning whom we have reason to wish for more information. Occasion has already been taken to observe how many fables are introduced into the narratives of certain travellers; and less acrimony should be testified towards those who examine their assertions by the aid of sound criticism. Every precaution is certainly necessary at this day to prevent Europe from being filled with such falsehoods as those concerning the giants of Magellan. It is however without reason that the *poulichis* and *patiah* are said to represent in India two Egyptian tribes, called by Herodotus the castes of boatmen and swine-herds.

The Indians differ exceedingly from the Egyptians by rejecting circumcision; by admitting a hell in the lowest part of the *Onderah*; and finally, by believing that endless chastisements are reserved for certain crimes, such as suicide and bestiality †. The Egyptians

* Holwell describes the chastisement reserved for the Bramins who kill animals, chap. iv.

† Suicide, according to the Indian tenets, is an inexcusable crime, because it interrupts the course of transmigration. How they can reconcile the conduct of the women who commit themselves voluntarily to the flames with their religion, is difficult to conceive; for their death is as much suicide as that of Calanus and some other Bramins mentioned by the ancients.

It has been impossible for me to learn what was the doctrine of the Egyptians concerning suicide, or how far it was conformable to

tians reprobated the idea of eternal punishments, and believed only in purgatory, called in their language *Amenthes*. From that place no road led directly to heaven, and those who entered there had to resume at a future day their former body, or the matter they had first animated. According to the theology of the Egyptians, the philosophers, and those who had practised the most rigid virtue, were the only people whose souls went directly to dwell with God, without passing through purgatory, or ever being subject to resurrection. It is proper to observe, that in this point alone their dogmas have some little affinity with those of the Hindoos.

In the Egyptian ceremonies a public confession was made in the name of some dead persons, declaring that they had constantly honored their parents; that they adhered invariably to the religion of the state; that their hearts were never sullied with a crime, nor their hands tinged with human blood in the midst of peace; that they had preserved and religiously discharged every trust confided to them; and finally, that during their whole lives they had never given reason to any person to complain of an injury. All these conditions were evidently indispensable for those who hoped to escape the *amenthes* or purgatory;

to that of the Greeks. The latter were probably the inventors of the whimsical ceremony of oscillation, intended to aid the souls of those who had hanged themselves to pass the Styx. For this purpose small figures were suspended by cords, and kept a long time in motion, to serve instead of funeral ceremonies, which the religion and the laws refused to those who took away their own lives. *O curas hominum!*

and to me it appears obvious that this doctrine on the duties of the man and of the citizen is an extract from what was read in the lesser mysteries, where it was probably displayed on two tables of stone. The Greeks assure us positively that two such tablets were brought before the initiated; and that circumstance tends to explain numberless difficulties.

We are here historians: our object is only to enumerate the different opinions, without attempting to indicate precisely how far they were either whimsical or useless, like that of making souls return from *amenthes* to re-inhabit the earth. The uncertainty relative to those who were to resume their former state, or pass immediately into heaven, rendered it necessary to embalm every person through precaution; and Plutarch says, that two places in Egypt, near Memphis and Abydos, were preferred to all others for interment. We have already remarked, that mummies, although very common at Memphis, are exceedingly rare towards *Mad-fune*, or the *buried town*; either because a mountain of ruins frustrates all attempts to penetrate into the vaults, or else the bodies deposited there are less numerous than has been generally believed. *El-Berbi* is properly the place where the famous temple of Abydos once existed: but now even the pedestals of the columns are removed, and cut into millstones, by the Turks and Arabs, whose passion for antiquities extends no further. Mr. Niebuhr, who was sent into Arabia by the late king of Denmark, pretends to have found a
third

third Egyptian burying-ground, situated about sixty miles from a place where the Red Sea can now be passed on foot without ascending above the mid-leg at low water.

It is very remarkable, that so many Egyptian monuments should be discovered in Arabia Petraea; and Mr. Niebuhr assures us that an entire Egyptian town is actually seen there, possessed of lands highly cultivated*, although never mentioned by any historian. The inhabitants of Heroonopolis might have carried some of their mummies about five miles beyond what is called *Gibel-el-Mokateb*, or the hewn mountain. But we have never understood that the Egyptians used sepulchral stones, such as Mr. Niebuhr calls *Leichensteine*; neither is any thing of the kind observed in the Elyfian fields, nor in the great burying-place between *Sachara* and *Bucharis*, on which the Greeks have so strongly exercised their imaginations. Cocytus, that formidable river, is now only a little canal, parting from the Nile and Lethe another still less considerable. The Egyptians, we may suppose, preferred that place for their sepulchre, because they wished to be interred near the pyramids. Those monuments, so well calculated to embellish descriptions, and far more important than the ditches of Cocytus and Lethe, have never once been men-

* So viele schöne gehauene Steine können ihrem Ursprung nicht von herum streifenden Familien gehabt haben: sondern müssen nothwendig von den Einwohnern einer großen Stadt herrühren. Und wenn in dieser jetze wüsten Gegend eine große Stadt gestanden hat so muß sie überhaupt auch besser angebauet gewesen seyn. Beschrieb. von Arabien.

tioned by the Greek mythologists, although the great pyramids on one side, and the smaller on the other, are seen distinctly from the Elysian fields. We must not however infer that they were built later than the days of Orpheus and Homer, because those two poets are totally silent on the subject.

The Egyptians do not appear to have ever possessed any writings ascribed to inspired authors; but the great colleges published, under the sanction of *Thoth* or *Hermes*, whatever concerned religion; and neither priests nor private persons ever treated such matters in their own name. All books relative to jurisprudence, history, and astrology, were likewise considered sacred, particularly when compiled or calculated by the Pharaohs. Treatises on astrology, however, were not ascribed to *Thoth*, but to their real authors, such as *Suchis* and *Pilestris*; and to *Necepsos*, the great promoter of that superstition so inherent in eastern nations*. Kerim-Kan, the conqueror of Persia, was accompanied in all his expeditions by astrologers; and Alexander long before had provided himself in Egypt with persons of that class, in the same manner that pilots are taken for an unknown coast. The services they rendered him by explaining an eclipse of the moon very remarkable

* Some modern authors have considered *Necepsos* as the inventor of judiciary astrology, because St. Paulin says,

Quique Magos docuit mysteria vana Necepsos.

Apud Auson. xix. Epist.

But as judiciary astrology is a folly more ancient than the days of this author, his testimony cannot be held conclusive.

in ancient history, were very great, according to Quintus Curtius, but Arrian relates the whole affair in a different manner*.

Clemens of Alexandria has given us the contents of forty-two Hermetic books adopted by the great colleges. The first volume was of little importance, because it contained nothing more than the psalms of the Egyptians; but we have to regret the loss of the second, where rules of conduct were prescribed for the kings, concerning which we shall have occasion to speak more fully in the sequel. Unfortunately even no extracts remain of the eighth and ninth volumes of that collection, treating of cosmography and geography. Some authors have regarded the latter as the favorite science of the Egyptians; and yet their notions concerning it must have been reduced to some practical rules in composing plans or maps. The Chinese were incapable of performing even so much on the arrival of the missionaries; for they possessed nothing more than scraps of paper containing some characters placed to the north or south of a river, without indicating either the distances or relative positions of places. The emperor *Can-hi* had to employ Europeans in composing maps of his own country, and these, after all, were so imperfect, that in the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty the latitude of Pe-kin was faulty, and the longitude very uncertain.

Had any treatise on cosmogony, written by real Egyptians, been preserved, we might be able to speak

* Curt. lib. iv. cap. 10. Arrian, lib. iii.

of that matter with more precision. In this uncertainty recourse has been had in vain to the pretended Hymns of Orpheus, the Theogony of Hesiod, and the Fragments of Sanchoniathon. Philo has endeavoured to render Phenicia in general, and particularly the town of Byblos, illustrious at the expence of history and truth, to the former of which he was a stranger, and to the latter an enemy. The inventor of the Hymns of Orpheus, the most expert of those pseudonymous writers, has at least preserved some few traces of the Egyptian doctrine, so much disfigured by the Greeks, and most of all by Plato *. They either did not understand the language of that country, or translated badly, and by terms far from being synonymous. The same thing happened in the beginning of the present century with regard to the Chinese, and we know how many disputes have arisen about the real signification of the words *Tien* and *Chang-ti*. It was then very strange to see a Tartar endeavouring to reconcile all the theologists by declaring, in direct contradiction to the decision of the pope, that the Chinese were not idolaters. But we may suppose that this man would have been much puzzled to explain clearly the nature of idolatry; because, most probably, he did not possess the subtilties of those illustrious Jewish writers, who, like Abravenel, decided positively, that the different

* The dialogue between God and Night, supposed to be written by Orpheus, has at least the style of the Asiatics. The Indians have another, far more judicious, where the Divinity is made to converse with Human Reason.

kinds

kinds of idolatry were neither more nor less than ten. But in this calculation they surely forgot the eleventh, which consists in usury and clipping money; for who are more idolaters than the avaricious?

It must not be believed that the Egyptians ever employed the term *Typhon* to signify the evil genius, called in their language *Seth*, *Babi*, or *Papy*, and very different from the *Grigri* of the negroes. Several fables concerning Typhon, who was said to be always connected with an Ethiopian queen named *Azo*, tend to suggest that this mythological phantom came originally from the savages of Ethiopia, who had probably invented some rude and noisy instrument to frighten away the *Babi*. In Siberia, along the coast of Africa, and in the new world, as far as Terra del Fuego, many nations employ bells, rattles, and drums, or gourds filled with stones, against the evil spirits. The savages frequently fancy themselves besieged during the night by demons, and on the slightest indisposition they apply to the exorcisms of jugglers, who always make such a horrible noise, that the patient is entirely stupified. As the Egyptians have always discovered, we will not say great constancy, but astonishing obstinacy in preserving their ancient religious customs, we may presume that the instrument used by the Ethiopians for driving away the *Babi*, was really the sistrum, carried by each assistant in all the Egyptian ceremonies. Borchart has even proved that in very ancient times Egypt was called the *Land of Citherns*, which were
not,

not, as we have already observed, such instruments as the celebrated musicians of Alexandria mentioned by Ammianus * could ever employ in their concerts. In the days of Plutarch the lower class of people in Egypt continued to believe that the noise of the sistrum drove away Typhon†, whose power diminished in proportion as reason advanced. The same thing has happened in every country of the world; for mischievous spirits and hobgoblins are only formidable among savages and barbarians. Different monuments in the towns of Apollo and Mercury attest that the Egyptians considered Typhon as subject to the power of the Supreme Being; and the sacerdotal fables represented that monster as drowned in the lake Sirbon, whither he was thrown headlong, after having been struck with thunder. It should likewise be observed, that he was always supposed to possess more influence on natural effects than in the affections of the human mind. To him were ascribed the burning winds, so noxious in that country, as well as the suffocating fogs around Pelusium; and it was he likewise who appeared in those water-spouts on the Mediterranean, which are still known by his name.

Thus the Egyptians would seem to have been much more embarrassed in explaining the origin of physical than of moral evil. It is easy to admit that beings supposed to be born free agents, should seek

* *Ne nunc quidem in eadem urbe doctrinae variae silent. Non apud eos exaruit musica, nec harmonia conticuit.* Lib. 22.

† *Typhonem clangore sistrorum pelli posse credebant.* De Isid. & Osirid.

in themselves alone the source of vices and of virtues: even the vulgar are capable of conceiving this; but the convulsions of nature, so far beyond the power of man, and destroying alike the innocent and the guilty, differ greatly in their eyes from that physical evil which produces disorder in the passions. After this, it is almost incredible to find Mr. Fourmont, in his *Critical Observations on the Ancients*, endeavouring seriously to demonstrate that the Typhon of the Egyptians was no other than Jacob the patriarch of the Jews *. This chimera alone surpasses all those of Huet, Kircher, and Warburton. The allegorical fables related by Plutarch seem indeed to indicate that the Egyptians considered the Hebrews as a wicked and typhonic race. Those allegories however were probably confined to the populace, and not extracted from the books of the priests, in which, according to Josephus, nothing more was found concerning the Jews than that they had been collected in *Avaris*, called likewise the *Town of Typhon*. The situation of that place is very interesting for geography, and still more for history; yet no person has hitherto been able to point it out with certainty. In our opinion *Avaris* is the same town with Sethrôn, and its district formed the lesser *Land of Goshen*; for the Jews never inhabited the greater, situated forty leagues more to the south, and belonging to a town called *Heracleopolis Magna*; while the little Land of

* Vol. i. lib. ii. cap. 15.

Goshen formed part of the territory of *Heracleopolis Parva*, or Sethron in the Delta *.

The mythological victory of the gods over Typhon may in one sense be supposed to refer to the expulsion of the shepherd kings, and in another to the draining of Lower Egypt by canals. Prior to that undertaking the country was uninhabitable, and it is easy to conceive that the fogs there must have been exceedingly pernicious. Independently of the other causes already assigned, as connected with the origin of the plague, it should be observed that the two chains of mountains bordering that country on both sides from the cataracts of the Nile as far as Cairo, form a long, deep, and narrow valley, where the air cannot circulate freely. Several elbows besides prevent the wind from following even a longitudinal direction. In the same manner, from the narrowness and irregularity of the streets of Constantinople, the contagion is constantly preserved, because the current of air wants force to dissipate the noxious particles. The ancients pretended that in Egypt the

* The Egyptian priests did not insert the real names of the usurpers in their memoirs; but they denoted them by odious symbols. Cambyfes was the *poignard*; Ochus, the *ass*; and the first of the shepherd kings, *Typhon* or *Seth*. Thus Sethron, where they resided, had the name of the Town of Typhon, in the sacerdotal books, although it was properly *Goshen*, or the lesser city of Hercules. The shepherds called it *Avaris*, or *Abaris*; but after their expulsion it received again the name of Sethron or Typhonopolis, which are synonymous terms.

wind

wind never descended low enough to agitate considerably the waters of the Nile; but they should have contented themselves with saying that the vessels are there subject to frequent calms. It is certain that, as Aristotle asserts, the Nile had formerly but one mouth*: all the others were formed by human industry, and increased to seven, not without some affectation of equalling the supposed number of the planets. But the Tanaitic mouth was never consecrated, as some have believed, to Typhon. The aversion testified for Tanais proceeded merely from its having been inhabited by the shepherd kings. That place was always exposed to the incursions of the Arabs, and at this day a horde of Bedouins feed their cattle in the district called formerly the Little Land of Goshen.

As we have aimed at nothing more than to indicate those points in which the religion of ancient Egypt differed essentially from that of China, it is not necessary to introduce long discussions on the panegyres, or solemn feasts. They were not so numerous as we might be led at first to believe, because they were not celebrated by all the provinces at one time; and many are regarded as different, although they may have been essentially the same.

* Meteor. lib. i. cap. 2.—Aristotle believed, that the only natural mouth of the Nile was that of Canopus: but in very ancient times the river discharged itself at the point of the Delta, about thirty leagues more to the south than Canopus. This appears credible on inspecting the face of the country.

The feast of bludgeons, held in the autumn, was probably no other than that witnessed by Herodotus at Papremis in the Delta, where the devotees fought with clubs, or poles; but, as he assures us, without the loss of any lives. Thus that folly, however great and reprehensible, could not be compared with the combats of the gladiators in Italy. The festival in the beginning of the dog-days seems to have differed little from that of the lamps in the town of Sais; and finally, what the Greeks called *Nilœa*, and the Romans the birth-day of Apis, coincided exactly with the feast solemnized at the summer solstice, as we learn positively from Heliodorus. Egypt then offered the gayest spectacle in the whole year; for those who were naturally gloomy and thoughtful made at least great efforts to surmount their melancholy. Mr. Niebuhr observes, that the modern Egyptians, even when most desirous of appearing joyful, are never so in reality. They seem indeed to have discovered the same disposition in former times, although the priests neglected nothing to render the theophanies and panegyres so very amusing, that they were called by Ovid the Delights of the Nile. Ancient physicians, who prescribed a voyage to Alexandria for their patients, surely did not hope for any advantage from the air of that place; but they were led to expect much from the diversity of strange objects and public amusements so numerous in Egypt, but too frequently accompanied with the grossest debauchery. Yet, whatever

Juvenal

Juvenal may have advanced *, we cannot believe easily that the indigenous inhabitants always carried dissoluteness to such excess as the Greeks of Canopus, who seem to have been unequalled in the world. Polybius assures us, that in his time Alexandria contained no other decent people than the native Egyptians, and they did not amount to one third of the inhabitants. The rest consisted of a mixture of Greeks and Jews joined to the refuse of all the different countries of Europe and Asia.

Besides the sabbath, which the Egyptians seem to have observed very regularly, they had a fixed festival at each new moon; one at the summer, and another at the winter solstice, as well as at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. All others, except that on the rising of Sirius, were changeable, and dependent on certain combinations known to the priests only, who transferred them arbitrarily, whenever they occurred on the neomenia, the equinox, or the solstice.

No modern author has ever been able to explain why the priests of Egypt adhered so obstinately to the uncertain year in matters of religion. They even exacted a dreadful oath from all their kings, previous to inauguration, never to abolish the imperfect year, which was too short by five hours, forty-eight minutes, and thirty-seven seconds†. The Jews, who

* ——— *Horrida sanè*

*Ægyptus; sed luxuria, quantum ipse notavi,
Barbaro famoso non cedit turba Canopo.*

† The priests of Egypt inserted an extraordinary day only on each fourth, fixed, or sacred year.

were .

were the worst astronomers in the world, except perhaps the Chinese, held at times a secret council to determine whether or not they should add a month to their lunar year. To this assembly neither the king nor the high-priest could gain admission, because, as it was the interest of the latter to prevent, and of the former to effect, an intercalation, both their votes appeared suspicious *. The sovereigns of Egypt were probably in the same situation; and the priests did not forget that when five days were at one time added to the year, the Pharaohs, as Plutarch says, insisted on having one entirely for repose. Besides, the sacerdotal order pretended to the exclusive right of composing the almanacs; and they alone were capable of the task, as long as the year remained uncertain. The inconveniencies this occasioned in civil life were however very trifling; because every thing belonging to agriculture and the overflowing of the Nile was exactly regulated by fixed feasts, which indicated to the people each new moon, equinox, and solstice. It was from Egypt that Greece and Italy received the only tolerable calendars they possessed. Lucan represents Cæsar, after having supped with Cleopatra, as boasting that the Julian year should cede in nothing to that of Eudoxus †. It is not however very probable that any

* Mof. Maimonid. de Consecratione Kalendar. & Ratione Inter-calandi.—The kings of Judea might in certain cases have had an interest in making the year consist of thirteen months; and it is right that such matters should not depend on the will of any class of men.

† *Nec meus Eudoxi vincetur fastibus annus.*

man should think of such matters at table with Cleopatra : besides, Eudoxus had studied in Egypt ; and as Cæsar employed an Egyptian, he could only value himself on his good inclination.

We shall terminate this article by some observations on the pretended zeal of making profelytes, attributed to the Egyptians. This opinion is founded alone on the numerous temples in different countries where divine worship was celebrated according to the Isiac rites by shorn priests clad in linen, whose probity was very doubtful ; but the real Egyptians never took any pains to make profelytes, and the worship of Isis was propagated in the islands of the Archipelago, at Corinth, Tithoræa, and almost every town in Italy, by Asiatic Greeks, who received Neophytes without subjecting to circumcision, although in Egypt that operation was considered as indispensable. Some temples of Isis, like that of Bologna, might have had fixed revenues, because they were founded by Roman families or rich freedmen ; but the greater part had only begging priests, who knocked at every door with their sistrum, and persuaded the common people that no crime was so enormous as that of refusing them charity *. This evil soon arrived at its height in Italy, where all exertions of the police to check it were ineffectual ; for the measures taken by the senate and the emperors against the worshippers of Isis were equally absurd with those they had employed to extirpate the Jews and astrologers.

* *Ecquis ita est audax, ut limine cogat abire*

Atlantem Phariâ tinnula sistra manu? Ovid. de Pont. i.

We do not, however, mean to deny that in the reign of the Ptolomies some real Egyptians might have been found both among the vagabonds already mentioned and the Galli ; but they were always of the dregs of the people, who, persecuted at home by poverty, had no other resource than the credulity and superstition of mankind.

S E C T. VIII.

ON THE RELIGION OF THE CHINESE.

THOSE who have endeavoured to establish some order among the different religions known in the world since its creation to the days of the emperor Augustus, have agreed to reduce them to three classes : Barbarism, Scythism, and Hellenism. Without examining here whether or not that circle is sufficiently extensive to comprehend every species and variety, we may observe that a particular class might well have been allotted for the worship introduced into savage countries by the Scythians or Tartars. It is now no longer doubtful that the religion of the ancient Chinese was a branch of Scythism, adapted to the character of a rude, restless, wandering, and pastoral people : nothing, however, could be more unfit for a peaceable and polished society. Thus the Tartars, even when capable of preserving their conquests, always abandoned their religion, and China for the same reason adopted the Indian worship : yet that country, situated at the extremity of our continent, and separated as it were from the rest of the world, should have adhered more than all others to its national institutions ; but they wanted force.

Leibnitz imagined that the *T-King*, which is, undoubtedly, the most ancient monument of the Chinese, contained the elements of binary arithmetic.

The conjecture, however, of that great man was by far too ingenious ; and it is surprising that he, who

knew the history of the ancient Germans, should not have perceived that they likewise have their *I King*.

With them, as well as with the Chinese, it was nothing more than a table of chances ; and we have every reason to believe that the same species of divination was practised by the Scythians. That of the Chinese contains sixty-four marks, composed of straight lines, some of which are whole and others broken. The person who consults Fortune, throws forty-nine small rods at random on the ground, and their fortuitous position, accordingly as it corresponds with the marks of the *I-King*, indicates good or bad auguries. Confucius, by writing the greater part of the rules for this forcery, has injured his reputation irreparably, not only in the eyes of philosophers, but of all those who can read without prejudice the history of China. With regard to the Germans, we are informed very minutely by Tacitus of their throwing rods in the same manner with the Chinese * ; and we have already had occasion, in another work, to show that this was the origin of the word *Buchstaben*, which is still used, although in a very different sense.

The mode of throwing the runes, practised by the other Scythian nations in the north of Europe, is exactly conformable to what is seen in the fourth

* Tacitus says, that among the Germans, who were originally Scythians, the prototype of rhabdomancy was engraved on rods ; and we shall find that the Chinese also sometimes had rods with inscriptions.

book of Hérodotus *, where we find that the Scythians had no other mode of divination than that employed in the greater part in the pagodas in China. The prototype of rhabdomancy is there fixed against a wall †; and Fortune is consulted in the manner we have described, without any more relation to binary arithmetic than to algebra. Although Mr. Leibnitz kept up a correspondence with the Jesuits of Paris, they never informed him that the *Y-King* was employed by the Chinese for no other than reprehensible purposes. Had that philosopher been as well informed as we now are of those matters, he would have changed his opinion; for no person was ever less inclined to seek reality in vain superstitions. When he undertook to defend the Chinese against certain imputations, he acknowledged candidly that none of their books discovered any true notion of the creation of the world ‡. This certainly weakens their deism; for those people are far from being

* Herodotus indeed asserts that hermaphrodites were found in Scythia, who used leaves of trees in divination; but an entire treatise would be necessary to explain who those men really were, and what was their manner of divination by leaves, which seems not to have been unknown to the Chinese. Many circumstances relative to the rhabdomancy of the Scythians and Medes are found in Dio. lib. i. Tertiz Compositionis.

† In some pagodas these rods are flat, about six inches long, and covered with characters; others contain different kinds, such as we find described by Mendoza, *Historia della China*, lib. ii. cap. iv.

‡ In his *Collection of Letters*, and the notes he has added to the *Treatises of Langobardi and Antoine de St. Marie*.

deists, who do not admit the Eternal to be the free creator of the universe, and, as Newton expresses it, the Master of Nature.

When Father Mersenne asserted in one of his publications that he knew twelve atheists in one house at Paris, and that the whole number in that city amounted to sixty thousand, the police, by seizing all the copies of the work, quashed this gross calumny of a begging cenobite who lived at the expense of the public ; but no such precaution was used against the treatise of *Langobardi*, another monk, who did not accuse fifty or sixty thousand persons of atheism, but the whole class of the *literati* in China. An imputation of that nature was too atrocious to proceed from charity ; and the more atrocious it was, the stronger proofs we ought to have had of its truth : yet nothing was ever less clearly demonstrated. These pretended men of letters are exceedingly ignorant ; and when in their disputes they no longer understand each other, which frequently happens, they trace out with their fans the characters of the word intended to be explained. Never, in short, was any language more unfit for metaphysical discussions than that of China, and it is called among the neighbouring states the *Tongue of Confusion*. Rules of grammar and syntax, invented to render languages distinct and intelligible, are unknown in that jargon ; it consists of no more than three tenses, and about fifteen or sixteen radical words, not one of which is synonymous with God, Creation, or Creator ; and the more circumlocutions are introduced, the greater,
of

of course, is the perplexity. If, under such circumstances, some of the *literati* seem incorrect in their notions concerning the essence of the Divinity, it does not follow by any means that they must be atheists; and their very superstition argues the contrary. This is explained in the clearest manner by the following passage extracted from the work of Father du Halde:

“ The most able of the Chinese doctors are ignorant in general of all parts of philosophy, if we except a little morality. They are incapable of reasoning with any justness either on natural causes and effects, or on the soul, the First Being, the state of another life, or the necessity of a religion, concerning all which they seem very indifferent. No people, however, apply more time to study than they; but their youth is spent in learning to read, and the rest of their life in fulfilling the duties of their employments, or in composing academical discourses. This total ignorance of nature is the reason why the most common effects of nature are always attributed to some evil genius *.”

It would be unjust to require that such men should speak and write like philosophers or metaphysicians; and surely, in them, superstition is more remarkable than atheism. Besides, when it is said that no idea of the creation of the universe is found in the Chinese books, we must consider the assertion as limited to those composed before the thirteenth century. Under

* Description of China, vol. iii.

the dynasty of the Moguls, some authors, such as *Hou-ping*, spoke of the origin of the world nearly in the same manner as the Mahometans.

Next to the *Y-King*, or table of chances, in the canonical order, some place the *Chou-King*, which is not an original and complete work, but an imperfect collection of historical occurrences, common-place moral sentences, and various superstitions. The compiler of this piece, which deserves the name of a rhapsody more than either the *Iliad* or *Odyssæy*, is not known; but he evidently lived at a period much later than the events recorded in his work. As the *Chou-King*, it is said, was not compiled until the days of Herodotus, it must always be impossible to ascertain how much has been added or retrenched by those who collected the different pieces; and the whole production appears very doubtful in the eyes of good critics, when they reflect that it was at one time committed to the flames, and afterwards composed anew: yet some traces of antiquity are found there, and it represents the Chinese, like the other Scythians, as much addicted to intoxication with *sampsu*, particularly in the northern provinces, where they first settled. That name is given to a spirit extracted from rice, millet, or wheat, and even from buck-wheat, as some pretend, although that grain must certainly have been brought into China from some other country. The vine is likewise considered as an exotic by travellers, who pretend that it was introduced there since the time of Confucius. This, however, is very uncertain; and we only know that

anciently,

anciently, as at present, the Chinese never pressed any liquor from the grape. Their method of obtaining a spirituous drink from rice was nearly similar to that practised by the Tartars in distilling the milk of mares. The *Chou-King* mentions nothing concerning tea; and we are ignorant of the precautions taken in those days against the bad quality of the water. The ancient Troglodytes employed an infusion of the *Rhamnus paliurus*, which might be very effectual in rendering the bitter waters of Arabia potable, and perhaps its properties in that respect are superior to those of the tea-tree.

It is not easy to give the reader an idea of the whimsical manner in which some matters of natural philosophy are treated in the *Chou-King*. The compiler not only introduces the five elements, but he asserts that each has a particular taste: thus, according to him, every combustible matter is bitter, and every thing sown and reaped is sweet; to prove which he should have cited mustard and coloquintida. It is difficult to conceive how any resemblance could be found between such absurdities, and the treatise of Ocellus Lucanus, who besides was a very inconsistent reasoner, as we perceive by his two arguments to prove the eternity of the world. He indeed was not the inventor of that system, but no person could have defended it more feebly.

The ancient inhabitants of Asia erred chiefly in what concerned natural philosophy: But the expressions of the *Chou-King* concerning forcery are diametrically

trically contrary to common sense; and that the reader may judge, we need only copy one passage:

If the grandes, the ministers, and the people, speak in one manner, and you think otherwise, but conformably to the signs of the Tortoise and the Chi, your advice will succeed.

If the grandes and the ministers are united in sentiment with the Tortoise and the Chi, although you and the people differ from them, every thing will succeed equally.

If the people, the Tortoise, and the Chi, are unanimous, when you, the grandes, and the ministers, have another opinion, you may be sure to succeed interiorly, and fail outwardly.

If the Tortoise and the Chi oppose the counsels of men, it is wise to undertake nothing; for evil alone must be the consequence.*

The first idea suggested by this passage is, that the compiler of the *Chou-King* was a Chinese madman. But as the bad custom of interrogating the oracle of Delphi on every subject, public and private, did not prevent the Greeks from becoming polished and flourishing, neither were any ill effects produced by the superstitions we have mentioned on the peasants or artists of China. When enlightened princes and able ministers appeared in that country, they allowed themselves to be as little imposed upon by the Tortoise as the Roman senate by the sacred chickens, or the Areopagus and Amphyctionic college by the

* Chou-King, part iv. chap. 4.

Pythia. Yet it were to be desired that the minds of the Chinese could be divested of such chimeras ; for although they do not affect materially the body of the state, yet still, among the common people, their effects are frequently melancholy.

In a well-regulated country some means might be devised of making the blind subsist without begging or telling fortunes. The multitude of such wretches, who ask alms in China, is astonishing ; and they have acquired by their foolish predictions so much influence on the minds of the people, that their agency was employed in propagating the dogmas of the Catholic religion. As long as some rich Neophytes paid them bountifully, they continued to recommend baptism to all those who applied for their advice on futurity. The government might easily prevent the monks from exercising their sorcery with rods in the pagodas ; but those who have seen the almanacks printed by direction of the pretended Mathematical Tribunal, and filled with the most absurd superstitions, are convinced that the Chinese have no inclination to open their eyes on the abuses which dishonour them in the eighteenth century.

It would be superfluous to enter into extensive details concerning the other canonical books, or *Kings* : that called the Spring and Autumn is nothing more than a single chronicle of the princes of *Lon*, and China contained at one time about one hundred and twenty such kingdoms ; but discord, which nothing can withstand, swept them all away amidst streams of blood. Those small states waged conti-
nual

nual war with each other, like the Aymans or Tartar hordes; and the manners of the Chinese were then perfectly similar to those of the Scythians. Even their princes drank out of human skulls, after having taken off the scalps, in the barbarous manner described by Herodotus, and still practised by the savages of North America. The *Chi-King* is a collection of verses, many of which, according to the confession of the Jesuits themselves, are extravagant and impious*. It is, however, curious to observe in the *Chi-King* an ode on the Ruin of Mankind, ascribing that misfortune to a woman, and announcing the speedy destruction of the world. This admits of no medium: either the piece has been composed at some recent period from Rabbinical ideas, or the author, considering the Chinese nation as the whole human race, alludes to the mistress of some wicked prince, who, through weakness for her, had dismissed the magistrates, and given their places to rogues. It is very common with the Chinese authors to complain of the numerous, but not unexampled, misfortunes occasioned to the state by the blind passion of some emperors. Another ode in the *Chi-King* describes the dreadful disorders introduced by *Pao-sse*, the mistress of *Teou*, a prince consigned to the execration of all ages, and commonly styled the King of Darkness: yet these facts do not prevent the *Chi-King* from appearing to be a very doubtful performance, not only on account of the articles rejected by the

* Du Halde, Description of China, vol. ii.

Jesuits,

Jesuits, but from the whole collection ; and as much may be said of the *Li-ki*. But the passion of the Chinese for the number five made them determined, at all risks, to have five canonical books to equal their five elements, and five manitons, which, according to them, preside in different parts of the sky under the direction of the Supreme Genius. Confucius maintained that the even numbers, two, four, six, eight, and ten, were terrestrial, rude, and imperfect, while the uneven numbers, one, three, five, seven, and nine, are celestial, particularly the two last. It is easy to perceive that this prejudice, altogether unworthy of a philosopher, had infected a great part of Asiatic and European Scythia many ages perhaps before the birth of Confucius : some traces of it are found not only among the Getæ, the Lamas, the Moguls, and the Calmuks, but likewise among the savages of Siberia. The first tribute of furs required from the Samoides by the Russians, under the czar Basil Ivanowitz, was brought to the receivers distributed in nine sacks. It struck me immediately, when examining some inscriptions found in Lapland, that the same mystic number very frequently occurred in them also ; and this is not surprising if the Laplanders are really descended from the Calmuks or Huns, as some endeavour to prove by analogy of language *.

* The characters found in Lapland are traced in this manner :

III XXX III. ††† III XXX.

This formula is repeated several times in different places, and gives always twice the number nine Knud Leems, Professor der Lap-pischen Sprache, Nachrichten von den Lappen.

What

What is called the ancient religion of China has now no priest or clergy, if we except the prince, who unites in his own person all the sacerdotal and imperial authority. Those who form the Tribunal of Rites are neither consecrated nor capable of offering great sacrifices; and the emperor at pleasure orders them to be chastised like slaves, or dismissed entirely, to mingle with the crowd of common men. When the eunuchs governed the empire, the Tribunal of Rites was composed entirely of such mutilated wretches as themselves. Despotism in fact has overturned priesthood in China, and trampled it under foot; for, in former times, the Chinese had certainly their priests, as well as all the other nations of Scythia. The Kans indeed always possessed the right of offering certain sacrifices, and immolating particular victims, from which they probably were first called *Sons of Heaven*; and the title, *Tanjou*, of the Calmuk princes resembles greatly the *Tien-tse* preserved by the emperors of China. All matters of religion were not, however, totally engrossed by the Kans: thus we find that the Moguls and Mandhuis permitted the *Kutuktus* to retain some part of their authority; and they continue to follow the great hordes when they lodge near the tent of the prince. They reside likewise at the court of Pe-kin; because the religion of the Lamas is professed by the Tartars, who, in one thousand six hundred and forty-four, subdued China. Many centuries before that conquest, the total extinction of the priesthood had made the Chinese entrust the superintendence of public education

tion to the magistrates; and some modern writers have bestowed the highest encomiums on that measure: but as the country contains many different sects, the magistrates of the provinces, having no uniform religion, may easily be led to enforce their particular opinions relative to *Fo* and *Lao-kium*. It is truly ridiculous to suppose that little mandarins are never the dupes of the seduction practised by the bonzes, who have so frequently acquired an ascendancy over the whole court, and sometimes to such a pitch, that we find the emperor *Kan-tsou* descending from his throne to become a novice in a bonzery. When any country has an uniform worship, the best method of giving all possible force to public instruction there would consist in entrusting it alternately to the magistrates and the clergy, according to invariable formularies adopted by the state. This would prevent continual and bitter complaints against wretched preachers; for they must then become all equally good.

China had in former times a high priest, called *Tai-che-ling*, whose power diminished in proportion as that of the emperor increased. This revolution, added to many others, enervated to such a degree the national religion, the dogmas of which were very ill connected, that it became necessary to introduce a foreign system from India. Unfortunately the newly-adopted worship was no longer in its primitive purity; for *Fo* or *Budha*, having blended with it the corrupt doctrine of repose and meditation, gave rise to monkism, or rather to that scourge, concerning which we shall speak more particularly hereafter.

The

The Chinese would have acted more wisely by adhering to the ancient ministry of their *Tai-che-ling*, than by abandoning themselves to the lazy and covetous race of the bonzes, who are unconnected with the constitution of the state. Whether they beg or possess lands, superstition is to them always equally necessary; for they find it as effectual in preserving as in acquiring riches. The Chinese, prior to the introduction of *Foism*, had indeed other monks, who followed the ancient sect of Immortals: they are mentioned by Herodotus as well as Plato, in whose time they were scattered in the north of Greece, and thence introduced by the Getae into Wallachia and Moldavia. It is not astonishing that the Chinese should be incapable of inventing a mode of worship adapted to the genius and morals of a civilized people; but they made the worst choice possible among all the religions of their neighbours*. In those days the superstition of the *Parfis* were preferable; particularly for a poor nation, to those of *Foism*; because they admitted no monks, and their dogmas were favorable to agriculture. Thus the princes of Asia, by receiving them into their dominions, had never any cause for repentance; and it were to be desired that the same thing could be said of the Jews in Europe, who have the more occasion to be reformed by others, as they are averse to it themselves, and

* Some historians pretend that the emperor *Ming-ti* was led to introduce the Indian religion into China from an apparition and a prophecy of Confucius. Such fables are too gross ever to be admitted.

continue

continue to practise usury as in the days of Moses. Although the Indian worship was much corrupted when introduced among the Chinese, it contained still some institutions very proper to correct the natural ferocity of a Scythian people. The innovator *Budha* had not diminished the horror for bloodshed which characterised the dogmas of the Hindoos, who, on that account, are pardoned, or at least not reproached, for many of their superstitions. The bonzes even endeavoured to abolish the punishment of death in China, without perceiving that it could never be dispensed with in a despotic state; for nothing is more variable than the will of princes on a tottering throne. The advice of the bonzes produced so little effect, that it did not prevent even the innocent relations of criminals from being constantly dragged to the scaffold, except the women, who are sold for slaves according to a maxim of the Scythians mentioned by Herodotus *. Some of their colonies brought the same custom into Russia, where it still continues.

The ancient religion of China consisted chiefly in sacrifices offered on the hills, whither the emperors repaired with the high priest, and both most probably immolated victims. In the province of *Chan-tong* is a mountain, called *Tai-chan*, supposed by some of the Chinese to be the highest in their country, and tradition, as well as history, informs us that its

* *Quos morte rex afficit, eorum ne liberos quidem relinquit; sed universos mares interficit, faminis nil laesis.* Herod. lib. iv.

summit was long appropriated to sacrifices. What is said of the inscriptions found there appears very suspicious; though it is not impossible but some may be found there similar to those prodigious stones reared by the Scandinavians on several high spots of northern Europe, and sometimes engraved with Runic and Laplandish characters. The latter are cut on pillars placed on the top of some elevated rock, where fragments of bones scattered round prove that sacrifices have been offered there for many years by the Laplanders—a circumstance which certainly does not weaken the opinion of those who consider the Laplanders as descendants of the Huns; for the place is still known where the latter immolated victims on a mountain in the province of *Chen-fi*. Other places have been seen by travellers in Tartary and Siberia consecrated to similar religious ceremonies; and they seem, indeed, to have been general among the Scythians, to whom the Chinese undoubtedly owe their origin. The name of their chief priest related probably to the sacrifices on the high places; but the great difficulty is to know what kind of divinities were addressed in that manner. The theology of the Chinese has filled heaven and earth with genii, among whom the Oreades, or those of the mountains, hold a very distinguished rank, and still receive divine honors. All the most celebrated pagodas of the whole empire are also situated on the most elevated mountains*: men who had neither

* New Memoirs on the present State of China, vol. i.

towns nor fortresses, and yet, like the savages of cold countries, were constantly at war, might frequently have found safety on the high grounds, after having been defeated in the plains. It was therefore natural that they should chuse such asylums for approaching as near as possible to heaven to return thanks or invoke future favors. Local divinities were insensibly fixed on the mountains, and to them the blood of victims was offered, which had before been reserved for the sky. The invention of genii, or the phantoms so called, seems to have followed the worship of the stars and the firmament.

When Father le Comte maintained, in his Memoirs, that the Chinese had honored the Creator in the most ancient temple of the universe, the Sorbonne, alarmed without reason, condemned the assertion *. Yet it is difficult to conceive how the Sorbonne could pretend to decide on that point; because it was merely an historical fact every way unconnected with the religion of France. Historians and philosophers should be allowed to judge of such opinions, and then it would have soon appeared that the assertion of Father le Comte was fabulous, and not heretical. In the most distant ages the Chinese had no temples, and they sacrificed, like the other Scythians of Asia, on the mountains. As Mr. Leibnitz could not perceive in all their books, written long after they became

* *Censura facultatis theolog. Paris. lata in propositiones excerptas ex libris: Memoirs on China—History of the Edict of the Emperor Can-hi—Letters on the Ceremonies of the Chinese.*

polished, the slightest trace of the creation of the world, it is easy to conceive what must have been the state of their ideas while they remained savages. Their barbarism was very great until the year one thousand one hundred and twenty-two before our era, when a conqueror, called *You-vang*, at the head of two or three thousand men, took possession of China : he made some laws, and endeavoured to fix the inhabitants, who were still fond of an ambulatory life, and frequently removed whole towns, consisting of portable sheds and tents. Their historical knowledge was then nothing more than some traditions concerning the ancient Kan *Fo-bi*, whose mother conceived him miraculously ; he had no father, according to the mythologists of China, who must have copied this fable from the Scythians. They likewise pretended to be descendants of a girl, who brought forth supernaturally a child called *Scythia*, according to Diodorus Siculus. Herodotus disputes her virginity, and suspects her having been connected with Hercules, whose name is never mentioned in the fables of the Scythians. Both those authors, however, agree on the monstrous figure of that woman : her body below the breast, say they, resembled a serpent ; and the Chinese pretend exactly the same thing of *Fo-bi* *.

* Father de Premare, who was indefatigable in his researches concerning Chinese mythology, informs us that an author named *Ven-tse* pretends that *Fo-bi* had the body of a serpent ; with regard to his father, he adds, *the Chinese say he had none, for his mother conceived him miraculously*. Preliminary Discourse to the *Chou-King*.

The

The great analogy between these traditions proves that they were taken from one source; and if we observe besides the conformity of the emblem of the dragon carried by the Chinese and Scythians on their standards, little doubt can remain of their having originated from a common stock. The first flags of the Chinese emperors, fixed like sails to their chariots, swelled in the wind in the same manner with those of the Scythians described by Arrian *.

It is said that the first religious symbol invented by the Chinese was a tripod, or, to speak more intelligibly, a great vase supported by three feet, and furnished with two handles, such as are described by Homer, or in the verses attributed to Hesiod. This resemblance of the Chinese tripod to that of Delphi can be accounted for only by adopting the tradition so common in ancient times, that the temple of Delphi was founded by Scythians, named Hyperboreans. They received that name from inhabiting to the north of the mountains of Thrace, where the southern Greeks had placed the source of the wind

* This passage is already indicated in the preface; we now insert the Latin translation:

Signa Scytica sunt dracones convenienti longitudine pendentes ex contis. Fiunt autem ex pannis inter se confutis, diversi-coloribus, capite, reliquoque corpore omni ad caudam usque funili serpentibus; in speciem maxime formidabilem, quantum potest, instructo. Utuntur autem his sophistatibus; quando quieti sunt equi, nil amplius quam pannos videas diversi-colores ad inferiora dependentes: quando vero currunt, inflati surgescunt in tantum ut ipsas quoque feras species referant. TACT.

called Boreas ; and thus all the little nations beyond Thrace were to them equally Hyperboreans. Others towards the Alps and Pyrenees received also that epithet, and it was they who must have sacrificed asses, and carried into Greece the first olive plants, which were certainly not brought from Sais in the Delta. Even admitting that the Scythians really founded the temple of Delphi, said by Pausanias to have been at first a paltry hut, its worship was certainly altered afterwards, and mixed with many Egyptian customs. The wolf, we find, was consecrated there to Apollo, exactly as in the great Lycopolitan prefectory in Thebais.

The ancient Chinese, it appears, were far from being contented with one mysterious vase ; for, by degrees, they added eight others. To them was attached the fate of the empire, divided at that time into nine provinces, each of which had consequently its own talisman. This whimsical superstition could have originated only from the kettles first employed in boiling the victims ; and those of the Scythians, we know, resembled, except in size, the bowls of Lesbos. Afterwards the vases themselves were revered, because the genii or manitous, it was supposed, lodged there to taste the meat ; and the Chinese, like all the Tartars, offered them the flesh of horses. Their other victims were dogs, swine, fowls, sheep, and oxen : but such sacrifices could no longer be continued when the emperors adhered strictly to the religion of India, which does not, in any case, permit the

the slaughter of animals *. It is only since the establishment of that worship that the Chinese have ceased at times from butchering camels, cows, and horses; yet the people eat them when they die of old age, or even of distempers, as is the case every day in Pek-in and Canton, without any measures being taken to prevent this abuse, which is sufficient to occasion epidemical disorders. Extreme want would seem to have made them surmount the natural aversion of mankind to such food; yet, while famine frequently carries off great part of the populace in the towns of China, the mandarins feast on the nests of certain birds, on the tendons of deer, the fins of sharks, the feet of bears, Molucca mushrooms, *squalops*, and every thing they can imagine most gratifying to their taste.

After the consecration of the nine mystical tripods, a prince, known by the name of *You-ye*, erected another idol representing the genius of the sky with a human form, as we find in a memoir sent by Father Amiot to Mr. de Guignes †. This however seems little probable, because the ancient Scythians never introduced statues in their religious worship; and our suspicions are increased by the odd circumstances he relates concerning that image. According to him, it was an automaton employed to play at chess or draughts

* During the reign of the emperor *Kao-tsu* no victims were immolated at the great sacrifices. That prince ordered figures of paste to be substituted for animals; but this custom, still more advantageous for the Chinese than for the Indians, has since been abolished, and butchers are again employed at the sacrifices.

† Inserted in the Observations on the *Chou-King*,

with disgraced courtiers; and whenever they failed to win the game, as is generally the case, he adds, they are massacred immediately. This ridiculous fable is founded perhaps on a custom similar to that mentioned by Herodotus, as practised by the Scythians on those who were accused of having sworn falsely by the throne of their king. To be condemned, or acquitted, they forced the augurs to play among themselves at a kind of divination by lot; and those who lost were inhumanly put to death, unless they all agreed that the person was culpable of the false oath laid to his charge. Besides, we perceive in that usage the immolation of human victims, offered under pretext of prolonging the lives of the kings when sick; and such is the origin of those acts of self-sacrifice, of which so many examples are cited in the history of China.

Among those people, properly called *Issedons*, some of whom inhabit to the south of the Oxus, and others in the country of Igour, animal sacrifices are performed to ancestors, and offerings made to the dead. The Chinese at all periods practised the same ceremony; and they appear to have had their *mias*, or places where they feed souls, prior to their having any temples. That superstition was an essential point of their rites and worship; but the great mourning has very wisely been abolished by the Mandhui Tartars*. It lasted three years, and during that time

* The Tartars have reduced the great mourning to seven days; but on their side they have fallen into another excess, by augmenting the expence of funerals, where they eat and drink like the Scythians, and more particularly like the Getae and the Issedons.

a son

a son was obliged every day to place rice or flesh ~~meat~~ before his deceased father. No public affairs could be transacted by the mourner; and if he had the misfortune to lose his mother at the same time, the ceremony continued for six years; and if to this succeeded the death of an only child, or an elder brother, the greater part of the person's life was spent in appearance of sadness and real inaction. Never was any custom more pernicious and irksome to society, or less necessary for the dead. Such doleful and fatiguing institutions have influenced so strongly the character of the Chinese, that they are forced against their inclination to have recourse to extravagant tricks of every kind for momentary relief. It is with moral as with physical disorders, contrary qualities serve alike in both to promote a cure. This singular disposition has by degrees filled the empire with people who cannot be called comedians, for they are really nothing more than rude buffoons, only capable of amusing men released from six years of deep mourning. What the Jesuits have written concerning the regularity of the Chinese theatres, has been contradicted by modern travellers, such as Osbeck and Torten, who are far from esteeming their farces. M. de Bougainville, after having been present at some of their representations, while at Batavia, contents himself with saying, that he never wishes to see again any thing of the kind*. That judicious writer seems to

* " Besides the principal pieces represented on the theatres, each cluster of houses in the Chinese quarter has a kind of stage, where

to have observed that the Chinese cannot dispense with their mountebanks ; and this necessity arises, as we have said, from the long duration of their gloomy rites. They were not indeed always exactly the same, but the changes which have taken place tended less to soften than increase their severity ; for such is the common course of superstition.

In former times no offerings were presented to the small tablets engraved with the names of the dead : but a child was made to eat and drink in the name of the manes, until he called out *Pas, I am satisfied*, and to this the sacrificer answered, *Eat and drink more* *. It is difficult to imagine how a striking resemblance could be found between this Chinese infant, and the custom of the Egyptians, who, at the end of their joyous feasts, introduced the figure of a dead person, and said to their guests, *Drink and rejoice now, for such must soon be your fate also*. An ancient poet has expressed this maxim in a verse too well known to require repetition. In China we find a funeral ceremony, a sacrifice, and an interment ; while the Egyptians, on the contrary, invited their friends to a great repast for amusement only, as we learn from Herodotus and Plutarch. Neither of those

where pantomimes and farces are played during the fairs. *Bread and public amusements*, was the cry of the Roman people. *Buffooneries and commerce* are every thing to the Chinese." Voyage round the World, vol. ii.

* Father du Halde mentions that custom in his *Description of China* ; and he was not aware, most probably, that it would be adduced as a proof of affinity with the Egyptians.

two authors ever thought of insinuating that the feast was celebrated in the presence of the mummies, or the embalmed bodies of their ancestors. The dead bodies in Egypt were immediately committed to the vaults, unless when some impediment took place either from the law, or on the part of the creditors; and a kind of infamy was always attached to those who were prevented from burying their parents. Besides, no connexion whatever can be discerned between a little statue of wood, representing death, and Chinese children in good health, who ate and drank in the name of the corpse of their father or mother.

Thus all the conformities hitherto imagined in this matter are of the same nature with those which have led Mr. Huet to believe that Moses was Adonis, or Jacob Typhon, according to Mr. Fourmont; while Groese sees nothing more clearly than that the personages in the Bible are the heroes of Homer, and a thousand circumstances in his opinion prove, that Ulysses and the nymph Calypso were Lot and his daughters.

What has been already said concerning the religion of the Chinese is sufficient to prove, that it differs in every point from that of the Egyptians, and the same dissimilarity is so evident in their rites, that nothing but blindness and obstinacy can prevent its being perceived and confuted. No human body has ever been opened in China with the idea of converting it into a mummy; and all practices relative to the art of embalming are there entirely unknown. The dogmas of the two nations, concerning the future
state

state of the soul, are equally irreconcilable; for the Chinese, so far from admitting the *amenthes* of the Egyptians, never heard of either purgatory or paradise, in all their canonical books or *kings*. On that account so many missionaries and others have constantly considered them as disbelieving the immortality of the soul, without reflecting that the offerings made to the dead contradict in the strongest manner that opinion. But, in truth, the Chinese can form no idea of any place of captivity for souls; and they suppose them transformed into manitous, or *kuei-chin*, and preserving to a certain degree the liberty of rambling*.

We find some light thrown on this matter by a sentence pronounced in China against two Jesuits who preached the dogmas of the Catholic religion, after it had been prohibited by an edict. *These bonzes, it proceeds, by inculcating a doctrine containing various points on life, death, paradise, hell, and other falsehoods of that nature, have deceived many people. Conformably to the laws of the empire, these bonzes have therefore merited death. On this the grand criminal tribunal marked on the sentence, let them be strangled†.*

* We do not speak here of the Chinese people, who, following the religion of India, believe in the transmigration of souls, the system most generally adopted.

The ancient doctrine of China, which supposes that souls become manitous, or *kuei-chin*, excludes entirely future pains and rewards: for these manitous are liable to be persecuted by the bad genii, to whom the Chinese give a name conveying nearly the same idea as our word *demons*.

† This sentence is extracted from the *Lettres Édifiantes*.

Those

Those, who passed this sanguinary decree, had no experience in human affairs. The Marquis Beccaria observes very justly, in his *Treatise on Faults and Penalties*, that corporal and painful chastisements should never be inflicted on fanatics, whose crime proceeds from pride, and that passion is gratified by sufferings. Infamy and ridicule, according to him, are the only means to be employed with such persons ; but to confine them is perhaps still more effectual.

Those, who pronounced the Chinese sentence already cited, considered as chimerical the places where souls were supposed to be shut up, either for punishment or recompence. But they do not explain there in any manner their own opinions, which are neither the sublimest nor the most reasonable. Human souls, according to them, are composed of two substances ; that by which they feel descends to the earth at death ; but the other is the source of thought, and inhabits the sky or the middle regions of the air. Those two parts are supposed to be so much affected by the piety and devotion of the sacrifices to the dead, that they re-unite to partake of the offerings destined for their use. The visible assistants however take care to have the best portion, like the Laplanders, who devour the flesh of the victims, and afterwards present the bones to the gods.

This strange system cannot be combined in any manner with the doctrine of paradise or hell, whence it is impossible for souls to escape so readily at the sight of a plate of rice, or flesh-meat, offered by the superstitious. We therefore perceive clearly the real meaning

meaning of the judgment pronounced against the two missionaries ; and it is far from proving, as some have hitherto so obstinately maintained, that the Chinese deny the immortality of the soul. Even their men of letters have frequently taken the greatest pains to raise the spirit of Confucius, whose history is very obscure, and considered by many learned men as nothing more than a collection of Chinese fables, to which silly missionaries have added their own. Father Martini relates seriously, that one day it was told to this pretended philosopher, that the hunters had killed a very uncommon animal, somewhat resembling a lamb : on this he began to weep bitterly, exclaiming in his great grief, that he now foresaw the short duration of his doctrine. This lamb, as we perceive, must have been a monster produced in the brain of some missionary : but even the disciples of Confucius are said to attest that the ghost of a man named *Tcheou-kong*, who was then dead upwards of six hundred years, appeared every night to their master. His mind seems besides to have been strongly infected with numerous superstitions concerning sorcery, or divination with rods, as we see by his interpretation of the fable of the *T-king*, which bears more signs of authenticity than any other of his supposed productions.

It is necessary here to state as clearly as possible the expressions of Mr. Vissdelou, because they are of the utmost importance, and seem altogether decisive.

Confucius not only approved of sorcery, but even taught in express terms how to obtain predictions ; and
certainly

certainly that practice has proceeded entirely from his suggestions in the *Commentary on the Y-king*. Besides, Tso-kieou-ming, a disciple of Confucius, whose lessons he copied in his *Commentaries on the Canonical Annals*, has inserted so many examples of sorcery that they are disgusting. Events there correspond so exactly with predictions, that, if he is to be believed, they were really so many miracles. All the Chinese philosophers until this day use such spells, by means of which they pretend to be capable of predicting every thing. In short, they all adhere to the *Book of Fortune**.

Mr. Vissdelou, who has furnished us with these explanations, was much better versed in the Chinese language and literature than Father Gaubil, who could not translate the *Chou-King*, without the assistance of a Tartan copy. Vissdelou, on the contrary, received an imperial certificate, acknowledging him to be a very learned man†; and as he could read the Chinese characters fluently, his testimony is here very material. It was only from adopting the common cant of other writers, that he gave the name of philosophers to the literati in China, who, corrupted by the doctrine of Confucius, pretend to prophesy through rhabdomancy. The gross superstitions of

* Notice of the *Y-king*.

† The imperial certificate, given to Mr. Vissdelou, was a piece of satin containing these words: "We acknowledge that this man, who comes from Europe, is higher in the knowledge and science of our Chinese characters than the clouds above our heads, and that he is more profound in erudition and penetration, than the abysses over which we walk." This silly jargon signified nothing else than that the bearer knew how to read and write the Chinese language.

those

those men betray so much weakness and ignorance, that they cannot be excused, even in the eyes of those who have carried their prepossessions to the greatest length in favor of China. Mr. de Guignes, having quoted a passage of Eusebius, concerning the inhabitants of Sericum, adds, that the eulogy given of those people was exaggeration, *in the same manner*, continues he, *that we now bestow so many extravagant encomiums on the Chinese*. The loss of time is not the only injury the reader has to suffer from historical fables, which are the source of frequent errors, although sometimes not more consistent than the dreams of those who sleep in peace. Nothing however can dishearten me in citing facts, and pointing out consequences; because that method alone can dispel all the false ideas, introduced into Europe concerning the Chinese by so many travellers, from Marc Paul down to Father Bouvet. The latter wrote a panegyric on the emperor *Can-hi* in the legendary style, and composed of nearly the same stuff with the account given by Martini of Confucius, who repeated incessantly, says he, *that a saint would appear in the West* *. If we are to believe some historians, who write like children, those words produced very wonderful consequences, by serving to introduce the religion of India into China. Those, however, who

* Martini, Hist. Sinenfis, lib. iv. *Kia-yu* is a kind of history of Confucius, which even the literati of China consider as a mere romance. Yet we could wish to have it translated, in order to see how far it suggested those prodigies, which the missionaries relate concerning Confucius.

examined

examined better the state of things, have perceived that a new worship, more connected than that of the ancient savages of Scythia, became indispensably necessary in China. At all events those missionaries cannot be justified, who dishonored their judgment and profession by maintaining, that Confucius prophesied the coming of the Messiah, by the table of fortune and his magical rods*.

By supposing for an instant, that the words attributed to Confucius were really his, the true meaning could only be traced to the conversation he is said to have held with *Lao-kium*, who travelled, it would appear, in India and Thibet, where he must have seen the grand lama. What we call at this day the sect of *Lao-kium* is nothing but the lamic worship somewhat disfigured, or the sect of the immortals mentioned by several Greek authors. They tell us, that, in their time, among the Thracians and Scythians, monastic orders, or religious congregations, were formed by people who never married, and in fact differed nothing from the bonzes of *Lao-kium*, generally called *Tao-sse*, or the immortals.

Thus the pretended saint, believed by Confucius to be in the West, was some celebrated fakir of India, or the grand lama himself. It is not probable that

* Father Couplet certainly intended to denote the Messiah in his book on the Chinese Sciences, where he makes Confucius use the following words: *Expeſtandum eſt quoad veniat ejusmodi vir ſummè ſanctus; ac tum demum ſperari poteſt ut adeo excellens virtut illo duce ac magiſtro in alium prodeat.* Such abſurdities do not deſerve to be conſidered ſeriouſly.

he should have alluded to any of those personages called in Europe the Scythian philosophers, such as *Zamoikes*, *Zeutos*, *Abaris*, *Diceneus*, and *Takorás*. *Anacharsis* seems to have been later, if it be true that he was cotemporary with Solon, and even with Confucius, whose chief maxims are certainly very similar to what Stanley, in his collection, attributes to *Anacharsis* *. The other philosophers of Scythia are little known; and we only understand that they taught morality, and the cultivation of some alimentary grains which grew wild in their country. Many plants of that kind are still found in a natural state between the fortieth and fifty-second degree of north latitude on our ancient continent. The origin of agriculture among the Scythians was enveloped in various fables; and those who inhabited near the Boristhenes contented themselves with saying, that one day a golden plough fell from heaven into their country. This fiction is not difficult to be interpreted, and it discovers more ingenuity than the great golden chain of the Grecian mythologists.

According to some discoveries, the name of Confucius did not become very celebrated in China until about twelve hundred years after the reputed time of his birth. It was in the eighth century of our era, that the emperor *Hiven-tsung* gave him the name

* Hist. Philos. part i. *Anacharsis* recommended moderation, which amounted nearly to the *perfect medium* of Confucius. The same thing has been said by the men of every country; and besides, the maxims generally attributed to *Anacharsis*, were perhaps composed by some other person.

of *King of Letters*; but he lost that vain and bombastic title under the dynasty of *Ming* *. From this we might be led to believe that the emperor *Hiven-tsong* was a well-informed and equitable prince, who wished to honor merit and encourage virtue. But, on the contrary, he embrued his hands in the blood of his own children, and discovered himself to be vile and despicable in every thing. He was notoriously addicted to the superstition of *Tao-ssé*, and governed by eunuchs, who filled the empire with robbers, and occasioned the most dreadful excesses.

It is not improbable that about this time of fanaticism and trouble the religious worship of Confucius became predominant in some provinces, while in others it was entirely unknown. At least the Arabs, who then travelled into China, do not seem to have had much information concerning it; and they tell us positively, that the Chinese had not begun to apply themselves to the sciences, and that they were much inferior to the Indians †. This is really true, even at the present moment, as far as it concerns astronomy; for the Brannins in our days have determined with some exactness the time when Venus was to pass the disc of the sun; which is more than any of the literati of China were capable of do-

* Confucius was divested of this title about the year 1384; and some historians believe that he was not called *King of Letters*, until he received that name in the year 952, from the emperor *Tai-sou*.

† Ancient Accounts of India and China, published by Renaudot.

ing. Neither did that country, as the Arabs justly observed, begin to have schools; and about the year one thousand three hundred and eighty-four of our era, they were first built by the emperor *Taessu*, founder of the dynasty of *Ming*. That adventurer, a man of low birth, who had been cook or servant in a convent of monks, then thief, and afterwards a leader of banditti, ended his career by becoming one of the greatest princes ever known in China. But the colleges which he erected soon fell into ruins, and the revenues attached to them were likewise dissipated, as we learn from a Chinese author who wrote under the present dynasty of the Mandhui Tartars. After having stated several causes of that shameful decline, he adds, that *the wise regulations of the emperor Taessu, for establishing schools in the country as well as in the towns, were very much neglected*; and Father Trigault assures us, that not one remained when he visited China †.

The novelty of the religious worship paid to Confucius is apparent from its ceremonies, as well as the form of the sacred vessels employed therein, and the ornaments of the tabernacle and altar. All these things are copied after the ritual of the Indian pago-

† Expedit. apud Sinas, lib. i. Nieuhof algemeene Beschryving van't Ryk Sina. The want of public schools makes it necessary to employ private masters; and the Chinese author we have cited observes very justly, that the poor cannot afford the expence. Ignorance is therefore perpetuated in such families; and the rich alone are in possession of those places which require a certain knowledge of the characters and canonical books,

das,

das, and the practices of the bonzes of *Fo*, except perhaps the immolation of animals. The latter seems to have been introduced by the men of letters themselves, as well as the childish custom of proving the victims with warm wine.

It would be useless to examine here whether or not the Jesuits in China approved of the solemn sacrifices offered to Confucius during the equinoxes; but they certainly condemned them highly in Europe. The reason they assigned was their marked affinity with the superstitions of India, which could not be tolerated, says Father le Comte, without scandal, and danger of subversion*. Whence it necessarily follows, that, previous to the establishment of the Indian religion in China, the worship of Confucius was very far from being the same as now; and no traces of it are found in any age anterior to our era. Some even pretend, that the emperor *Schi-chuan-di* committed to the flames all the works of this man, who wrote, or rather etched, on pieces of wood filed together on cords. Those shingles must have loaded several carts, had they contained all the writings now published in the name of Confucius. Yet nothing tends to prove that he is the author even of the *Tchun-tscieou*, or *Spring and Autumn*, the shortest and most interesting of all his supposed productions. It is placed among the number of the *kings*; but no person knows with

* The Jesuits condemned the solemn sacrifices made to Confucius; and they approved of others less solemn. *Responsum Episcopi Beritenfis ad Cardinalem Marefcottum*, &c.

any certainty by whom that chronicle was compiled *.

We have already observed, with regard to the burning of the books by *Schi-chuan-di*, that the fact was not only doubted by some critics, but even the motives assigned for it seem insufficient. The barbarian, it is said, was mortified by the praises bestowed on monarchs who were dead upwards of one thousand years. It would be exactly the same thing, to represent the king of Spain as envious of the panegyrics invented by some fools in Castile for Tubal Cain; who having passed the Straits of Gibraltar on his anvil, reigned gloriously over all the countries beyond the Pyrenees; and his name is still inserted as the first of the Spanish kings.

Others pretend, that *Schi-chuan-di* caused all the writings of Confucius to be destroyed, because he thought they favored feudal government, which is the worst of all, except despotism. But perhaps in the whole world no works can be found more calculated for arbitrary sway than those published in his name. They require a blind submission to the caprices of the prince, without condemning paternal power degenerated into tyranny or political slavery, personal servitude, polygamy, confinement of women, or the custom of selling children. Thus, so far from having any just notions of morality, he was ignorant of all the principles of natural right; or else those who

* Some of the Chinese literati do not count this chronicle among the canonical books, but merely as little fragments of the *Yao-king*.

forged

forged his supposed books, were such wretched compilers, that, as Thomafius observes, it is impossible to read some passages seriously *. The many common-place maxims they contain required no extent of genius; for moral sentences of the same kind have been common among all the nations of the ancient continent, if we except some few hordes of men, who, little better than savages, conducted themselves chiefly by instinct. But the morality of the Chinese is entirely speculative, and their dishonesty in commerce so great, that no gold or silver money can be trusted in their hands, and they adulterate even that of copper.

When the disputes in Europe concerning the ceremonies of China, were conducted with that atrocious fury called theological hatred, which changes men into tygers, it was asserted that the literati in China were atheists in theory, and idolaters in practice. Yet the mind of man, with all its extravagancies, cannot be supposed capable of reconciling so great a contradiction. The men of letters in China do not certainly believe the soul of Confucius to be the Divinity. Thus, their days of fasting, their sacrifices, and all the ridiculous practices they have borrowed from the bonzes of *Fo*, prove evidently their superstition, but not their idolatry.

Real philosophers would endeavour to honor the memory of Confucius by rendering themselves more virtuous; and not by shedding the blood of victims.

† *Pensées sur les Livres nouveaux, à l'an 1689.*

The great Newton, who could not endure to see the death of a chicken or a lamb, would have been very far from assisting at their sacrifices in spring and autumn. Superstition characterises equally the less solemn ceremonies, which take place nearly twice in each lunar month, and instead of having any connexion with philosophy, they are dedicated to the prediction of future events.

If the French nation, resolving to reverence in a very extraordinary manner the memory of Descartes, should introduce the monkish practices of the Minims and Carmelites, they would no longer be regarded as wise men, but as silly people, worthy of the greatest contempt. Yet the literati of China have undoubtedly copied their ceremonies from those of the monks; and like them they fast in preparing for their sacrifices. Mr. Jackson, after examining why the Chinese have no mysteries or initiations, like the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, concludes that nothing of the kind was necessary with them, because they never deified men *. He imagined that nothing more was revealed on those occasions, than that the gods of paganism had been mortals: but that supposition being false, the reason alleged by him vanishes; and if capable of proving any thing, it would be exactly the contrary of what he intended.

By reading attentively the Pantheon of Mr. Jablonski, whose researches have been carried as far as possible, it will be seen that the Egyptians never ren-

* Chronological Antiquities, at the article China.

dered

dered to any man, living or dead, such suspicious honors as the Chinese did to Confucius. Hence it follows, that in China mysteries were more necessary than in any other place, to preserve the human mind from the abyss into which it might be drawn by the appearances of public worship. If we are to believe the missionaries, such abuses have in reality been carried to the greatest length; and we know the famous decree published by Cardinal de Tournon at Nankin*. But here we are not to reason after the ideas either of missionaries or cardinals; and it is sufficient to observe, that, if not the slightest trace of initiations has ever been known among the Chinese, it is an additional proof that they never had any communication with the Egyptians, who, according to Warburton himself, were the inventors of those ceremonies.

Although *Fo* or *Budha* has preached, as is well known, a double doctrine, we do not find that the bonzes of China ever took advantage of it to establish mysteries. They follow almost generally, at this day, the exterior or symbolical worship; and it is only among the *fakirs* of India, that some sectators are found of the internal doctrine, in which certain ignorant travellers and missionaries fancied they saw all the principles of Spinoza. But no system was

* The third article of this decree condemns as detestable idolatry the worship paid by the literati to Confucius. But were the Chinese to pronounce entirely from appearances on what passed in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, they would probably think of issuing a decree likewise to the same effect as that of Tournon.

ever

ever more contrary to atheism than that of *Budha* ; and were this fact not universally admitted at the present day, we might be tempted to demonstrate it most evidently. That Indian who corrupted the ancient dogmas of his country, was an austere fanatic ; he overstrained every thing, and rendered virtue ridiculous. It was not only necessary, according to him, to destroy the passions, but even the senses ; and he ordered his disciples to confine their thoughts solely to the Divinity, keeping their bodies in continual repose, and their minds in constant meditation.

The vain pretext of attaining a state of tranquillity, entirely opposite to the nature of man, and even of beasts, filled China at length with a multitude of monks. The greatest impostors, and most cunning of these intriguers, obtained fixed establishments in the best provinces, while the others wandered about begging or robbing the people. The abuse became so general, that complaints were carried to the throne of the emperor, who was a prince born with the lowest sentiments, and whose weakness approached to idiotism. Instead of relieving his subjects by destroying the disorder in the bud, he declared himself publicly in favor of the bonzes and bonzesses of *Fo*, who ever since the beginning of the fourth century supposed themselves capable of contending with the adherents of *Lao-kium*. This spirit of rivalry was the source of many crimes, of which only the smallest part are known in Europe : both parties had recourse to intrigues, invectives, and libels. The monks of

Fo

For are said to have caused more than five thousand volumes to be written in their name, either to justify their rules and doctrine, or in defending themselves against calumnies, and abusing others. They always represented to the government, that as the empire had no priests, the people could not dispense with monks; and they held forth that hospitality was confined to their pagodas, when that virtue became more necessary from the wretched state of the inns. Travellers, they alleged, could gain admittance at every hour into their monasteries; and even ambassadors had frequently lodged there; because *cong-quan*, or public-houses, were not erected in all the towns, or had fallen, as frequently happens, into ruin.

The inns are indeed beyond comparison more paltry in China than even in Spain and Portugal*; but the bonzes had no right to remedy one great abuse by another, still more enormous. The Jesuits pretend, that no person can pass a night with safety in the bonzeries; and yet we find by their own accounts, that they frequently lodged there, without our ever having heard the number of those who were robbed or assassinated.

* Some of these inns appear better furnished than others; but they are all exceedingly wretched. They consist of four earthen walls without plaster, which sustain a roof where the rafters are visible. After all, it is fortunate if this covering be weather-proof. The chambers are sometimes full of holes; and destitute of even a common pavement. Du Halde's Description of China. Such are the best hotels in China: the others, in the centre of the provinces, are too bad to admit of any comparison.

The

The possessions, as well as the credit of the monks of *Fo*, were considerably augmented by an edict of the emperor *Ven-ti*, who declared himself their protector ; -but still more by the culpable conduct of the emperor *Kao-tsou*. Having escaped from his palace, he was soon after found in an hermitage, or bonzery of the second rank, where he began by shaving his head, and ended by embracing all the rules of *Fo*. This filly prince was afterwards brought back to court ; but his folly remained incurable.

As the northern parts of China were then governed by particular princes, the monks found more difficulty in fixing themselves there than in the south, where the fertility of the soil being greater, and physical wants fewer, the people could give way to their more exalted enthusiasm, in providing them with food and clothing. All at once the resolution was taken throughout the northern provinces of destroying the whole of their convents, some of which, like that called *Tong-chen*, or perpetual peace, contained upwards of a thousand persons. In short, all the bonzeries there were reduced to ashes about the year five hundred and fifty-seven of our era ; but no measures were taken to prevent them from being rebuilt ; and they re-appeared soon after.

This storm in the north had not subsided more than sixty-nine years, when another arose in the very court of the emperor *Tao-ti*, who, owing to the wretched state of population, could no longer recruit his armies. The bonzes of *Lao-kium*, who directed that prince, considered the moment as very favorable

favorable for ruining the monks of *Fo*; and they advised *Tao ti* to carry off from the convents one hundred thousand men, and force them to marry in despite of their vow of chastity. That advice produced an edict on the twenty-sixth of May, in the year six hundred and twenty-six, which reduced almost to nothing the number of pagodas and monasteries, called *son* in China. But as the impositions of the monks of *Lao-kium* had dictated that edict, the intrigues of the monks of *Fo* occasioned its repeal forty-two days afterwards, to the shame of the prince and his ministers.

The weak emperor *Tao-ti* was replaced on the throne by *Tai-tsung*, who, far from diminishing the number of bonzes and bonzesses, received into his states certain devout strangers, supposed by some to have been Nestorians. Their establishment in the province of *Ghen-si* caused for a time the hatred and jealousies of the monastic orders in China to cease; and they united to exterminate these pretended Nestorians. Their pagodas were levelled to the ground, and their adherents cruelly persecuted until the reign of the emperor *Hiven-tsung*, who finding himself attacked in the centre of his dominions by robbers, and on the frontiers by the Tartars, not only protected the different sects, but even favored the followers of Confucius.

The conduct of the Chinese hitherto discovers neither rule nor plan for delivering themselves from the bonzes, who, instead of being reformed, were attacked suddenly like enemies, and afterwards received into favor. Much of their property was taken

taken away at certain times, and more restored to them at others. In this manner they fluctuated between extremes with an inconstancy only equalled, perhaps, by the facts we are about to relate.

As the police was then exceedingly neglected, a new order of *Seng*, or strange monks, found means to introduce themselves into the empire. They are taken by some for Lamas, and by others for Manicheans, who had formed themselves into a congregation*; but, at all events, they were included in the proscription of the emperor *Wou-tsong*. When we know that he had placed his confidence in the monks of *Lao-kium*, it can no longer appear surprising, that those avaricious fanatics should have taken advantage of that instant of favor, to crush their rivals, and exterminate them altogether.

Tchao-kouey, who was prelate, or chief, of the order of *Lao-kium*, promised to procure the drink of immortality for the emperor, if he would issue an edict against the monks of *Fo*, or *Che-kia*. The prince took the potion, and signed the decree, on the seventh of August, in the year eight hundred and forty-five of our era. This occasioned the destruction of four thousand six hundred principal monasteries, which contained two hundred and eighty thousand monks and nuns, whom the magistrates restored to the state, and subjected to the poll-tax, from which they had withdrawn themselves fraudulently, at the expense of the people. The number of monasteries of

* Father Pons says, that India contains hermits, or monks, called *Mouni*; and it appears that this word has been confounded with *Mani*, which is sometimes used in Asia to denote the Manicheans.

the

the second rank, condemned to the same fate, amounted to forty thousand, possessing one hundred and fifty thousand slaves, and about one million *tsching* of freehold lands. All these were confiscated by the emperor, and added to his domain, without examining how they had been acquired; for he concluded every thing found there must be usurped property*.

The order of *Fo* became so completely annihilated, that the sectaries of *Lao-kium* published their triumph in canticles of joy to Heaven for such remarkable favor. But the intriguers of the court, the women, and the eunuchs, prevailed in having the edict modified seven or eight days after it had been issued. The emperor allowed four or five hundred monks of *Fo* to remain in his dominions; but all the rest were dragged ignominiously from their convents. Not a ruin of all those buildings was allowed to remain, and the clocks were converted into money, which was as scarce as misery was common. China then presented only the shadow of an empire, and it deserved the title of the *land of abuses*. This reform, so very desirable, continued to be executed with success, when the emperor *Wou-tsong*, under whom it had commenced, expired, most probably by the drink of immortality he had the weakness to swallow. *Suen-tsong*, who succeeded to the throne, had ideas very different from those of his predecessor; and he protected the monks of *Fo* against

* If the number of monasteries then existing in China be exaggerated, it does not proceed from the translators. The Chinese text says four *onan* of *sou*, which makes forty thousand convents of the second order.

those

those of *Lao-kium*. Thus that order, which seemed to have been destroyed, rose again suddenly, and became more insolent and pernicious to the state than ever. The prelate *Tchao-kouey*, the author of the revolution, was hung or strangled without any formality; and the emperor condemned nine or ten more of the followers of *Lao-kium* to a similar destiny.

Thus, in four hundred and forty-seven, only two years after the resolution had been taken of relieving the people by discharging a multitude of drones, an imperial edict was issued for rebuilding all the convents and pagodas destroyed in the preceding reign. The emperor then enjoined the tribunals to allow all those of both sexes, who presented themselves for that purpose, to embrace the order of *Fo*, or *Che-kia*. Such has been the strange, whimsical, and inconceivable conduct of the government of China. That country is now afflicted more than ever with the greatest of all plagues; and no hope remains of any fortunate change, unless the men of letters apply themselves to true science with more ardor and success. In fact, it is only by spreading the light of philosophy, that the darkness of superstition can be dispelled; and all attempts to destroy the bonzes, while ignorance prevails, are contradictory. Those men, who, having escaped amidst so many tempests, survive as it were even destruction, would disappear gradually at the dawn of science. This is so true, that when a prince of Japan founded schools, and invited the learned into his dominions, the monks were

were seen deserting in whole troops from a country, where they began to starve, because the people became enlightened. Yet the institution of monkism in Japan is much more reasonable than that of the bonzes in China; for the blind only are admissible in the order of *Fakis*; and we have already observed that cecity is very common there as well as among the Chinese, who suffer their blind to beg, tell fortunes, or live by prostitution.

The Tartar emperors indeed have not ceased, during more than a century, to encourage the sciences; but their progress has hitherto been imperceptible. If the Chinese could divest themselves of that national vanity, to which they have no title, they would adopt without hesitating the writing and language of the Mandhuis. This must be less difficult, as many of the literati know it already; and all Tartars, male or female, who intermarry with the Chinese, are obliged by a rigorous law to teach it to their children*. That language is infinitely superior to the Chinese jargon, in which nothing can be written with precision on true science; because it contains neither declensions, conjugations, nor conjunctions for uniting the sentences. Those who ap-

* Some learned Europeans maintain, that no alphabetical character could ever be adapted to write a singing language like that of the Chinese. Admitting this to be true, it is an additional reason why they should adopt the Tartar language, which can be written by our letters. The pronunciation of the R is not an insurmountable obstacle, if the Chinese would make the attempt. But the changes made in our days, by *Kien-long*, in the Tartar characters, are not merely useless; they are pernicious.

ply to study, would certainly make more progress in one year, by means of the Tartar idiom, than could be effected in fifteen by that of the Chinese, joined to their characters. The whole of youth is consumed, and the memory enervated, in acquiring some knowledge of the letters or signs alone. Thus the literati, who have learned as far as ten thousand characters, appear silly and stupid after the prime of life, and they are continually teasing the missionaries of Europe for some nostrum to fortify the memory. But the best remedy they can use is, to abandon their manner of writing, and adopt that of the Tartars. Conring supposes that the hieroglyphics prevented the progress of the Egyptians in the sciences * ; but he reasoned without understanding his subject. It is not necessary to go farther back than the days of Moses, to prove that the Egyptians certainly made use of alphabetical characters in the same manner that they are employed by us at the present day. The hieroglyphics were reserved for particular matters, and their number must have been very confined, because we see the same figures in almost all the monuments. Thus it was very improper to compare the Egyptians, who had an alphabet, to the Chinese, who neither used any thing of the kind, nor ever heard of the twenty-two letters, such as they have appeared on the bandages of the mummies. Mr. de Guignes could not have known those characters; and we must, therefore, consider what he

* Medic. Herm. cap. xv.

has written on that subject as a mere exercise of the imagination. It is in fact as little founded as the voyage of the Chinese, who are made by him to arrive in America through Kamschatka, as Bergerac went to the moon by the way of Quebec.

After this digression, it is proper to examine what the bonzes of China have advanced in favor of their being useful to the state. Their hospitality, in the first place, is the effect of an abuse which might easily be remedied by improving the police, and erecting inns for the accommodation of travellers of every rank and condition. The *cong-quan*, or public-houses, fell into ruin, it is said, on the invasion of the Tartars. But we have little reason to think, that those conquerors would have amused themselves with throwing down or plundering buildings almost entirely destitute of furniture. They were besides of no utility to common travellers, because, in order to procure lodging there, it was necessary to be provided with an order from the court. Concerning the want of priests, or sacrificers, who cannot be dispensed with in the Indian religion, which has been embraced by all the people of China, that indeed is a great inconvenience. If the emperor, however, would only allot one fourth part of the lands possessed by the bonzeries for the maintenance of sacrificers, the purpose would be much better answered, and those men might be employed in the public schools, if any should be afterwards erected. Never was it known that the bonzes instructed youth in any of the provinces of the empire; and their ignorance is such,

that they are really incapable of the task. Thus, in whatever light those men are considered, they are unworthy of the least indulgence.

With regard to the monks of *Lao-kium*, their pretensions are said to be founded on some right, claimed by them, of assisting as musicians at the great sacrifices offered at each equinox and solstice by the emperor, or the person deputed by him, in case of sickness, minority, or absence.

Admitting this to be true, the monks of *Lao-kium* have at least some connexion with the ancient religion of China. Yet the services they render, by producing a detestable music during the sacrifices, could never compensate for the evils they create by deceiving poor wretches, and even by poisoning them with the drink of immortality. By pretending to have the secret of preparing this potion, they attract as much veneration as by their legends concerning *Lao-kium*, who descended, as they allege, from the royal family of *Tcheou*. Thus, according to their genealogy, the imperial family of *Tang* must have issued from *Lao-kium*. Yet, in our opinion, he was an obscure man; and historians do not agree even on the precise time in which he lived *. The greater part make him, with much apparent probability, cotemporary with Confucius; and the prelates of his order affirm that, since his death, their regular succession has never once been interrupted. They therefore esteem themselves

* Some historians pretend, that *Lao-kium* lived still at the extinction of the dynasty of *Tcheou*, about 249 years before our era.

as more noble than those reputed as belonging to the family of Confucius, who did not become illustrious until a much later period. It appears to me, that this pretended family of Confucius is likewise some kind of monastic order or religious congregation; and this might have been known by making researches at *Chio-fou*, in the province of *Chan-tong*. That spot, so interesting, has been entirely neglected; at least we do not find any satisfactory information concerning it. No judicious person will readily believe, that one family could have inhabited the same burgh, during more than two thousand years, amidst all the dreadful revolutions produced in China by civil wars, foreign invasions, irregular shocks of despotism, famine, revolts, and combinations of robbers. The latter alone, in a certain length of time, pillaged almost the whole country; and perhaps not one town escaped being taken by those ruffians, who sometimes were known to shed more blood than foreign enemies. When Canton fell into their hands, they slaughtered upwards of one hundred thousand persons; and their cruelties at Pe-kin have been already mentioned. It is therefore scarcely credible, that the family of Confucius could have remained constantly until now in the small town of *Kiou-fou*, unless we consider it as a monastic order. In that case, the fact changes entirely its nature, and does not require the supposition of any regular filial succession. This opinion seems to be confirmed by the title of *Saint* given by the Chinese to Confucius; and the religious worship they render to him, conveys

ideas very different from those attached by us to the word *Philosopher*, which has nothing synonymous in their language. It is said, likewise, that he introduced several changes in religion, and abolished the custom of placing small statues in the tombs; but he would have acted more wisely by preventing his countrymen from filling the mouths of the dead with pearls, and burying them in a ruinous manner.

As the great sacrifices of the Chinese have long been fixed to the equinoxes and solstices, that circumstance is frequently cited as a proof of their progress in astronomy ever since the most distant ages. To this is added the first chapter of the canonical book, called *Chou-King*, where, as Father Gaubil informs us, *Tao* is said to have known with precision the duration of the solar year, and the most exact method of intercalation. Instead, however, of employing that form of almanac, he forbade it among the people, and instituted the lunar year. But the fact is, that the first chapter of the *Chou-King* is a composition of a much later date, and cannot be admitted as proving any thing in favour of *Tao*. The canonical books of the Chinese are too imperfect and confused to admit of much faith; and the *Chou-King*, said to have been compiled by Confucius, who lived seventeen hundred years after *Tao*, is at best only a fragment, where forty-one chapters are wanting. Independently of all these considerations, it is impossible that the Chinese, while they remained, by their own confession, in a state of barbarism, could have been better acquainted with astronomy than at this day, when they are obliged

obliged to employ Germans at Pe-kin to compose the almanacs of the empire. Can it be supposed, that, if any among themselves were capable of performing such calculations, they would invite strangers from a country three thousand leagues distant, to prevent a total confusion? It would be exactly a similar case, if the Academy of Sciences at Paris applied to the Talapoins of Japan to foretel eclipses in France.

The Chinese year, we should observe, was always lunar, and never commenced towards the rising of Sirius. Thus they differed as much from the Egyptians in their calendars, as in their religious institutions. If they were alike addicted to judicial astrology, their error is common to all the nations of Asia and Africa, where the ancient worship of stars and planets necessarily produced that species of superstition. When the Arabs became masters of the tribunal of mathematics, they took care not to risk their bread by abolishing such practices; and Father Hallerstein himself is now under the necessity of inserting various predictions in the *Tang-sio*, or almanac, compiled by him, as chief of the astronomers. That body is principally composed of Europeans; and, without their aid, no *ban-lin* or college of Pe-kin could be compared to the present *Gia-mea-el-asbar*, or the academy of Cairo. Yet the arts and sciences in modern Egypt have not preserved the shadow of their former splendor.

The disorders prevalent in the Chinese calculations at the conquest of the Mogul Tartars, prove sufficiently that, long previous to that epoch, the grand

sacrifices could not be performed exactly as they were intended at the equinoxes and solstices. Neither of those periods were indicated in their calendar, which was held in such contempt throughout Asia, that the people inhabiting between Bengal and the province of *Tun-nen* refused to adopt what they justly termed a bundle of errors. When the Arabian astronomers, by order of *Koublai Kan*, had rectified these blunders, the pride of the Chinese became insupportable, and they ordered the Indians to receive their calendars, or prepare for war. As no attention was paid to this menace, a Chinese army of twenty thousand men marched against the pretended rebels; but it received such a total defeat, that scarcely a single person escaped; and, ever since, the project has been abandoned entirely. The intention was really to establish a commerce with those books, although each of them sold for no more than eight kandarins. The Chinese traffic with every thing, and, when unemployed in that manner, they are, like the Jews, out of their element.

Since the second correction of the Chinese year, which took place under the Tartar emperors of the present dynasty, the solemn sacrifices are performed punctually at each equinox and solstice with great parade; and the number of musicians employed there may amount to about five or six hundred. Yet these concerts, where the sound of the drum always predominates, can give no idea of the ancient music of the Chinese, which, as they say, is entirely lost. According to them, every thing has degenerated; and they

they were much greater artists in a state of barbarism, under the Kan *Fo-hi*, than ever afterwards in civil life. Such ridiculous opinions do not deserve to be refuted. Their ancient instruments of music, of which we find the different forms in the *Cheu-King*, were beyond comparison more imperfect than those they employ at this day, as every person must perceive on inspecting the figures.

Whenever the noise of the music is heard, the victims are butchered, and offered with much incense to the genius of the sky. No less solemnity is observed in sacrificing to the genius of the earth, whose temple is constructed in a different manner. All these genii, according to the literati, are emanations of *Tai-ki*, or the Great Height; and in this we observe nothing more than a rude deism. Men plunged so deeply as they are in an ignorance of nature cannot possibly attain more sublime ideas, without the aid of philosophy and true science, which would soon destroy the doctrine of spirits or manitous. On the four sides of the altar are seen great stones, representing the genii of the mountains, wood, metal, air, and fire. It is chiefly in honor of the latter, says Mr. Osbeck, that the Chinese observe the feast of lanterns, that their towns, so very combustible in their nature, may be preserved from the flames*.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the idea, that this illumination had some connexion with the feast of lamps celebrated at Athens, and Sais, in honor of

* Reise nach Ostindien und China,

Minerva. The Chinese never even heard of that deity; and this is so certain; that no person of real learning would attempt to maintain the contrary. If the most knowing among the literati at Pe-kin were to see a figure of Minerva, with the symbols of the lamp and the sphinx, which the Greeks placed on her helmet, or with the scarabee, according to the ideas of the Egyptians, they would understand as little of that allegorical statue as of the hieroglyphics, or the obelisks.

It might have happened that the Chinese celebrated the feast of lanterns in February, on the same day allotted by the Catholics of Europe for the feast of luminaries; and, in that case, it would be ridiculous to infer, that one of those usages had been copied from the other. The most striking resemblances are frequently deceitful; and we have an instance of this in the error of Bochard with regard to the fox-races in the circus at Rome. As fire brands were tied to the tails of those animals, he imagined that the Romans intended in that manner to perpetuate the remembrance of an event so memorable as that of the burning of some corn-fields on the confines of Palestine, contrary to the law of nations. But, in truth, the Romans were very indifferent about what passed in Palestine; and the fox-race was much indebted to the imagination of Ovid.

Nothing is more fabulous than what Father le Comte, in his Memoirs on China, relates concerning the origin of the feast of lanterns. He pretends that the emperor *Kie*, having complained of the shortness of

of human life, was advised to light up his palace in such a manner that night could not be distinguished from day. This insipid story, as we observed before, must have been extracted from another in Herodotus, relative to a king of Egypt, who having understood, from the oracle of *Buta* in the Delta, that he had only six years to live, caused likewise his court to be illuminated, that he might enjoy the more light; as if a man, who had only six years to live, could on that account dispense with sleep. But Herodotus, without examining matters so closely, contented himself with noting down all the absurdities he could collect from the interpreters of Egypt.

Father Parrenin took care to write from Pe-kin to Mr. Mairan, that this origin of the feast of lanterns was a mere fable, published in Europe by Father le Comte, who had, as we see, profited greatly by reading Herodotus; and if the thing deserved the trouble, we could demonstrate here, that the Jesuits have inserted facts extracted from the Bible in the History of China. When the Chinese authors are consulted on the pretended adventure of the prince or emperor *Kie*, we find nothing but childish and disgusting prodigies. They assure us, that during his reign a star fell from heaven; that the system or course of the planets was evidently deranged; the mountains fell down, and three suns appeared at once towards the east. Yet no person could see at the court of the prince, because he had rendered all his apartments inaccessible to the rays of light. It is almost superfluous to add, that history, written in this manner, does not

read. All that the Chinese know not really, concerning the emperor *Kie*, comprehends very little indeed; but with them prodigies are frequently substituted for historical facts. They incessantly praise Confucius for having spoken of the fall of stars, the rolling down of mountains, the song of the matchless bird, the apparition of the unicorn, and the metamorphosis of insects, which they long considered as miraculous.

Thus, as we have seen, no connexion whatever subsists between the feast celebrated in honor of Minerva, and the great illumination of China, where all the symbolical divinities of Egypt are unknown. It is not necessary to consider here the difference of the terms *Tien* or *Chang-ti*, used by the Chinese to denote the genius of the sky, and the Egyptian words *Phtha* and *Cneph*, in which Eusebius perceives the Creator of the universe. The Jesuits acknowledge unanimously, that the Chinese form no such ideas of their genii; and Mr. Leibnitz conforms to that opinion*.

Confucius, it is said, was asked to explain his sentiments of the Divinity; but having excused himself for the time, he went home, and wrote, as Father Couplet says, the following words in his Commentary on the *T-king*:

The Great Height engendered two qualities: the perfect and the imperfect. These two qualities engendered

* Martini, among the rest, expresses himself thus: *De summo ac primo rerum Auctore mirum apud omnes Sinas silentium: quippe in tam copiosa lingua nec nomen quidam Deus habet.* Hist. Sin. lib. i.

four images : these four images produced the eight figures of Fo-hi, that is to say, all things.

Who at the present day would venture to assert, that this declaration contains the smallest particle of common sense? It answers no purpose to object, that other ancient philosophers have sometimes written in a manner equally unreasonable. They at least never pretended to write treatises on sorcery, or rhabdomancy, such as that wherein Confucius is said to have inserted the words we have quoted, relative to divination by rods; which, we may be allowed to repeat, discovers no symptoms of common sense.

If any thing could have plunged the literati into fatalism, it must have been the foolish doctrine of Confucius on the power of chance; and certainly some of them have hazarded very monstrous chimeras, on the revolution of the five Chinese elements, which alternately produce a new imperial family or dynasty. When, for example, an imperial family is produced by the power of water, or the genius presiding over that element, it cannot give more than twenty emperors, whose actions are all the effect of fate or necessity: if they were free, say they, we could not predict them by the table of chances, commented upon by the great Confucius.

Although Mr. Visdelou attributes this doctrine to the men of letters in general, yet we must suppose that only the silliest among them are capable of publishing such absurdities. Probably, indeed, they understand nothing of the matter; for in China, as in the rest of the world, people frequently confuse their
ideas

ideas in such a manner, that they can no longer explain either what they credit or disbelieve. Thus, speaking of the religion of China, we have stated only general opinions; because it would be difficult to find two or three hundred of the literati possessing precisely the same sentiments, and a like number capable of remaining one day invariable in their principles; and as many more who form distinct notions of what they pretend to believe. Those, who make the human soul double, which comes nearly to the same thing with the *homo duplex* of some metaphysicians of Europe, may be counted among the number of those who do not understand themselves. Father Longobardi says, in his famous treatise, that the literati of China declared to him openly their sentiments of atheism. But they had perhaps fuddled themselves, like Hobbes, whose infidelity frequently disappeared with his intoxication.

The passion of the Chinese for sorcery proves them to be superstitious, but not at all fatalists. Besides the divination by rods, they practise another mode with a plant called *chi*. After having drawn out the fibres of the leaf, they throw them at random, and then examine how far their position agrees with the *T-king*. This method appears to me to have been practised with very little variation by the soothsayers of Scythia when they twisted the leaves of the willow, erroneously called the lime-tree in the Latin version of Herodotus. That author must have had very particular information concerning the Asiatic Scythians, for the truth of his details is confirmed daily;

and it would be difficult to conceive the possibility of his being so well acquainted with the customs of those distant nations, did we not observe the same accuracy in the geography of Ptolemy. He points out precisely some parts of Sericum, or Igour, although those countries were the end of the world to the Greeks and Romans, who knew as little of the Chinese as we do of the inhabitants of the South Pole. Herodotus had travelled into Colchis; and, when we reflect on the extraordinary route by which the merchants of that country found means to traffic with India, we may be able to account for his precision.

It is generally believed, that the sectaries, supposed to be Nestorians, went in the seventh century to preach Christianity in China, where they were first protected, then persecuted, and finally massacred. They had the disciples of *Lao-kium*, the bonzes, and the empress, for declared enemies; and their preaching answered no other purpose than to produce bloodshed. Not one Christian remained in China at the conquest of the Mogul Tartars, who favored indiscriminately all strangers, whose industry might be useful to the state, without caring what was their religion. *Kosblai Kan* even fixed some Christian families at Pe-kin, which the patriarch of Bagdad on one side, and the pope on the other, erected into an archbishopric. But the emperor established a tribunal, called *Tjoun-fouffe*, to superintend the two metropolitans. On the expulsion of the Mogul Tartars, the Christians, after suffering another violent persecution, were at length

totally

totally extirpated. The most prudent fled to Tartary; some embraced the religion of the bonzes, and the rest were massacred. In the year one thousand five hundred and ninety-two, when no trace of Christianity could be found in China, some missionaries began again to preach there; but the Neophytes, except a very small number, who held considerable employments, were all of the vilest dregs of the people. As the wives of that class of men went to church, the better sort of Chinese were much scandalized, and they considered the missionaries as corrupters. Some Jesuits fancied they could calm such suspicions by having separate chapels for the two sexes*: but this intended remedy only aggravated the offence. The governor of *Ham-tchéou* was so exasperated, on hearing that many women were shut up in a church with two or three men, that, without waiting for orders from court, he caused the church to be levelled to the very foundation. In their respective departments, the governors act in a manner almost despotic; and the Christians have sometimes been strongly protected in certain provinces, while violently persecuted in others. Polygamy, however, was always an insurmountable obstacle to the progress of their doctrines. The missionaries, insisting positively on repudiation, would not allow their converts to preserve more than one wife: but they never attempted to abolish personal bondage, although it is more contrary to the rights of nature than polygamy, which is almost a necessary

* Gobien, History of China.

consequence of slavery in warm countries. It was pretended, that the primitive Christians never required such sacrifices; and that different religious communities in Europe possessed bond-men during many centuries. But this was a dreadful abuse, which cannot be alleged as a precedent; for what is contrary to natural right can never be admitted in morality. When a Chinese had married several wives, in conformity to the laws of his country, he could not repudiate them, especially when mothers, without injustice; but he was always at liberty to make his slaves free; and thus the conduct of the missionaries was altogether contradictory. On the other hand, the government of China never knew what religion should be tolerated or excluded. Admission was given there to Jews, Mahometans, Lamas, Parsis, Manis, Marrha, Si-lipan*, Yeli-Kaoven, Armenians, Bramins, Nestorians, Greek Christians, who had a church at Pe-kin, and to Catholics. The latter, however, suffered more persecution than all the rest together, and they were at last totally exterminated. The emperor *Can-bi* alone issued three contradictory edicts concerning them. He first prohibited preaching, then gave permission, and afterwards enforced his first decree, without ever knowing in what the Catholic religion consisted. It is a fact, that the missionaries never dared to show him either the Bible or the Evangelists. We are assured, and with much ap-

* The religion of the Marrha and of the Si-lipan is not well known; but it is probably a mistake to suppose them to be Christians.

parent truth; that in one thousand six hundred and ninety-two, this prince knew nothing of the conquests made by the Europeans in America, on the coast of Africa, in the Molucca Islands, and in so many parts of Asia. Let us only reflect on such men as the Mandhui Tartars, who all at once subdued China, without having any notion either of history or geography; and then we cannot be surprised, that the emperor *Can-bi* should be totally ignorant of the conduct of the Christians in America. It was from his being previously unacquainted with such matters, that the memorial, presented at Pe-kin in one thousand seven hundred and seventeen, made an indelible impression on the minds of the Tartars. It represented the Christians as a band of conspirators, who intended to render themselves masters in the empire, as they had done in the New World. This project certainly was not real; but it seemed probable to the Tartars, who had not eighty thousand effective men when they entered Pe-kin. They were indeed favored by the eunuchs of the palace; but the taking of the capital was nothing, as long as they had not possession of the southern provinces, which however were conquered very rapidly. Not one inland town of China is capable of resisting a regular siege of three days; and admiral Anson declared, that a single ship of sixty guns would be sufficient to sink a whole Chinese fleet. The person, who sought to alarm the court of Pe-kin on account of the Neophytes and missionaries, must therefore have been well acquainted with the weakness of his own country. It has, in fact, hitherto
escaped

escaped the fury of our European robbers, merely from its great distance; and even that barrier would vanish on the discovery of a north-west passage. The princes who succeeded *Can-hi*, far from tolerating Christianity, did not cease, until the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six, to restrain Europeans more and more, and to use greater precautions against them. But, without intending any act of benevolence, they would have rendered the greatest service to Europe, by shutting their ports entirely to the ships of the five nations allowed to traffic at Canton.

We terminate here this Section, after having demonstrated that never two nations resembled each other less, in what concerns religion, than the Egyptians and Chinese. The immolation of victims indeed was common to both; but the same usage has been found by modern travellers to subsist in all the countries they have visited, except India and Thibet, where the particular circumstance of the transmigration of souls has counteracted the general rule. The learned have been at a loss to know, how so many nations of the ancient and new continents could have fallen alike into an extravagance so opposite to all notions of common sense, as that of slaughtering animals in honor of God. Some suppose it must have commenced with prisoners made in war: but the first people evidently imagined, that nature contained certain genii, who came to taste the blood, flesh, entrails, or smoke of the sacrifices. As all were originally hunters, and afterwards shepherds, it is more natural that they should have sought to regale the gods

with flesh, than with fruits, which the manitous themselves could find in the forests. Those, who quitted the pastoral life to till the earth, began at length to offer the first fruits of their fields; and then the immolation of victims should have ceased. But it was continued, as we have said, from the obstinacy with which the first civilized nations adhered to the religious practices of savage life. This is the reason why so many customs, invented by the Scythians, are found still in China, while those of the Ethiopians were as evidently continued in Egypt.

S E C T. IX.

GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT.

Omnia post obitum fingit majora vetustas.

WHEN the ancients spoke with so much commendation of the civil institutions and police of Egypt, they were under a constant illusion. This was occasioned by the Greek authors, who confounded the laws, really observed in that country, with others, which never existed but in books. The second volume of the Hermetic Collection contained many sage maxims, relative to the manner in which the Pharaohs ought to conduct themselves, in order to reign happily, and gain the applause of the people. But many of those princes were far from being inclined to perform the duties prescribed to them ever since the foundation of the monarchy. Some were slothful, voluptuous, silly, and detestable tyrants, who observed only vain ceremonies, and really trampled equity under foot. In the same manner, all the wicked kings of Judea performed their legal ablutions with the greatest exactness, and never deviated at table from the Mosaic regimen, while the people were crushed under their unlawful exactions.

Ammianus Marcellinus is wrong in supposing that the Roman code was copied from the jurisprudence of Egypt. On the contrary, the decemvirs at Rome rejected the only Egyptian law proper for a republic. It related to debtors, on whose persons no creditor

could exercise the smallest violence; and this regulation was as wise and moderate as that of the decemvirs was barbarous. In short, the twelve tables did not contain the slightest trace of Egyptian jurisprudence, of which even Solon had little knowledge when he reformed the town of Athens, and abolished some of the decrees of Draco; for this took place previous to his journey to Sais, where he seems to have traded.

Some of the Egyptian laws are so simple and clear, that they do not require to be analyzed. The contrary, however, was found in the regulation concerning thieves, which Diodorus the historian, and the lawyer Ariston, by contradicting each other, rendered so complicated, that no philosopher could conceive either its meaning or object. According to Diodorus, the thieves of Egypt were obliged to insert their names in a register; and when any thing stolen was claimed, they restored only three-fourths of the value, because the legislator allowed them to reserve a portion, either to recompense their address, or to punish the negligence of those who suffered their property to be stolen. Diodorus, however, should have perceived that many particular cases could not be decided by this pretended law, but must necessarily have required another, concerning which he is silent.

I remember having read, says Aulus Gellius, in a work of the lawyer Ariston, that among the Egyptians, who were remarkable for their sagacity in studying nature, and great penetration in inventing the arts, every species

species of theft was allowed by law, and practised with impunity.*

By reflecting on these two whimsical institutions, it is easy to perceive that they could not subsist in the same society, but might well belong to different nations. The authors, who have spoken concerning them, were evidently ill informed, because they are at variance with each other and with themselves. What has been taken for an Egyptian law is in reality an agreement made with the Arabs, who could not be prevented from stealing and robbing. It therefore became customary to redeem such effects as had fallen into their hands, as we find practised frequently at the present day. The Bedouins restore for the hundredth part of their value, the jewels they acquire in plundering a caravan; and they would be content to have always the fourth part in money, for the whole amount of the wares they capture, under the vain pretext, that the deserts of Arabia Petrea are their dominions. We find a modern traveller endeavouring to justify this plea, as if it was not known, that the Bedouins commit such depredations very far from their wildernesses, on territories, of which they were never really possessed, and where of course it is unjust in them to exact tribute from passengers.

Under the shepherd kings the Arabs spread themselves in troops over all Egypt, and it became abso-

* *Id etiam memini legere me in libro Ariftonis jureconfulti haudquam indocti viri, apud veteres Aegyptios, quod genus hominum constat & in artibus reperiendis solertes extitisse, & in cognitione rerum indaganda sagaces, furta omnia fuisse licita & impunita.* Noët. Att. lib. xi.

lutely necessary to have some fixed compact with them, relative to the spoils they might collect, by stealth or plunder. We have reason to believe, that pilfered goods were likewise bought back from the Jews; for it would be very surprising, that such men as they should have stolen only once in Egypt, especially when protected by the usurpers. Those tyrants favored shepherds and oppressed husbandmen, in order to counteract, as much as possible, all the institutions of the vanquished nation.

It is now easy to form some idea of what was meant by Diodorus Siculus. The names of the thieves were not registered, but application was made to the *emir*, or *scheic* of the Arabs, who knew his subjects, and made them restore what they had taken, on receiving the stipulated compensation *. We do not know how far the same conduct was observed under the government of the Persians, when a whole republic of banditti was established in the Delta. Something of the kind, however, must be adopted in every country, where robbers become too powerful to be either expelled or destroyed. The marshes they possessed near the Heracleotic mouth of the Nile were impassable; and neither the Persians nor Greeks could ever rid themselves of those enemies; for their small vessels served them for houses;

* If the spirit of the Egyptian law had been what Diodorus fancied it to be, other regulations would have been necessary for those who had stolen without having inscribed their names, or who, although their names had been inscribed, did not restore exactly what they had stolen.

and,

and, on the slightest alarm, they concealed themselves at a great distance among the reeds.

The extreme rigor of the laws in Egypt towards those who subsisted by dishonest means, proves how little they were intended to tolerate theft among the native inhabitants, who were neither Arabs nor Jews. Common sense has taught mankind, that, in a well-regulated society, no robust subjects should ever be permitted to beg; and Plato dreaded such people so much in a republic, that he employs three different magistrates for driving them first from the markets, then from the towns, and afterwards from the territory*. If that philosopher were now to reappear, and witness how many, in the different monastic orders, live entirely on alms, he must suppose that the human understanding had suffered a considerable decline.

The Greek authors pretend, that Egypt had five or six different legislators; and as such they consider *Amasis*, who preceded only a few years the fall of the monarchy. It appears, however, that all the general laws were much more ancient than the Greeks believed; and what they assert must have proceeded entirely from their being very rigorously observed under certain princes, whose names are not exactly known. Pharaoh *Necchoris*, said by Diodorus to have been a very celebrated lawgiver, was not even known to Herodotus. Thus it becomes impossible to place the laws of Egypt in any chronological arrangement;

* De Legibus, dial. xi.

which,

which, however neglected by Nicolai and Casal, is very important, in order to trace the progress of legislation *.

Sabaccon, for example, is said to have abolished in every case the punishment of death; because he preferred condemning prisoners to work for the public. By these means, their sufferings were longer, but less severe; and although not so striking, they became more useful. Yet long afterwards, in the reign of *Amasis*, we find death inflicted on those, who, averse to work, and destitute of fortune, subsisted by that species of industry which is common to rogues and beggars. By supposing all this to be fact, the jurisprudence of Egypt would appear to have been astonishingly variable. But in fact *Sabaccon* never had any pretensions either to humanity or generosity. According to all historians he was a usurper; and if he really did not cause Pharaoh *Bocchoris* to be committed to the flames, at least *Nekos*, the father of *Psammetichus*, was slain by his orders; and *Psammetichus* would have shared a similar fate had he not fled to Syria. *Sabaccon* was, therefore, far from being the mildest man of his age; and *Strabo* informs us that, instead of condemning the culpable to works of public utility, he cut their noses, and banished them from Egypt. Thus it is supposed to have been during his reign, that an establishment was formed, called *Rhi-*

* Nicolai has written a treatise, with the title of, *De Aegyptiorum Synedris & Legibus insignioribus*. But it is necessarily very confined, because the author never understood the spirit of any law. His work is, therefore, less read than even that of Casal, which contains at least some singular monuments.

noculure,

nocolure, or men without noses; but this must be considered as fabulous. The word *rhinocolure* seems to have referred to an opening in the coast, as appears in the map, where a promontory most probably had sunk down. In geography, the Arabs term *raaf*, or nose, what we call *cape* after the Italians.

Those who lavish encomiums on a princess, because she never caused any person to suffer death, although a prodigious number have been mutilated in her reign, may likewise, perhaps, praise Sabaccon, who cannot be said to have done any other laudable action than that of abdicating the crown, and returning to Ethiopia, whence he came. Yet he was not the inventor of mutilation. It had been long prescribed by the laws of the country for different misdemeanors, and in this some have pretended to discover a remarkable conformity between the Egyptians and Chinese. The amputation of the leg at the knee, a punishment inflicted anciently in China, was never practised among the Egyptians, who cut off other members, such as the tongue, hands, nose; and, according to some authors, the very genitals. It would be superfluous to repeat here what we have already said, to prove that this could never have been the origin of the eunuchs of the palace, who suffered mutilation in childhood, before they were capable of deserving such dreadful chastisements.

Several nations of Europe, Africa, and Asia, have had recourse to various kinds of mutilation for certain crimes, which, according to their manner of thinking, did not deserve capital punishment. Thus

no particular resemblance can be admitted in this point between the Egyptians and the Chinese. The latter, ever since the origin of their empire, have permitted malefactors, in certain cases, to commute their penalties for money. This first abuse introduced another in China, where poverty, or avarice, induces wretches to support floggings for those culprits who have money to pay for substitutes. The judge wishes to exhibit a punishment, and provided he finds any body to endure it, it is indifferent in his eyes what person presents himself for the purpose. In Egypt nobody was allowed to purchase with money a discharge from corporal chastisements decreed by the law, and much less could any miserable wretches be placed under the hands of the executioner, instead of the real culprits. Thus the Chinese are, perhaps, the only people in the world, who buy and sell punishments; and among them, as Mr. Salmon justly observes, the first notions of justice are perverted, while all its formalities are rigidly observed*.

When so many pecuniary fines were inflicted in the time of the lower empire, nothing more was necessary to characterize a bad government. The commutations for money, so frequent in the codes of barbarians, prove equally a most defective jurisprudence. The Egyptians confined pecuniary fines to one single case, which was that of having inconfi-

* Present State of China, vol. i. Father le Comte says, that near all the tribunals people are found who hire themselves to receive chastisement in the place of criminals. The judge must certainly first of all be corrupted.

derately

derately destroyed any of the sacred animals protected by the law. But it was always a capital offence to kill the ibis and the vulture. This latter is privileged also by the English; and it was of more utility in ancient Egypt than all the other birds and quadrupedes together. Had not the Thracians and the Greeks inflicted similar punishments on those who took away the life of a stork or an ox, the conduct of the Egyptians would be unexampled. Yet no precedent could render it entirely excusable. When any practice, very trifling in appearance, may be found derogatory to the public good, the legislature has a thousand means of remedying it, without having recourse to torture. The Tuscan law, which inflicted arbitrary penalties on those who destroyed their own bees by means of sulphur, was altogether ineffectual; and experience proves that such measures never abolished a pernicious custom in any country.

It is our intention here to speak only of the abuse which each person may make of public property, or even of what he himself possesses. We do not pretend to develop the atrocious game-laws, still subsisting in so many places of Europe, where the killing of a roe-buck is sufficient to occasion the death of a man, and the infamy of a family. This barbarity originated from a race of men, who anciently lived chiefly by the chase, and whose jurisprudence should have been reformed, when they began to cultivate the ground.

The Egyptians had very severe laws against unfair dealing. They imagined in their purgatory, or
amenthis,

amenthis, an avenging genius for each species of crime committed in the world *; and yet they were accused of fraudulent practices in commerce. This however was imputed to them by the Greeks alone, who were a thousand times more notorious for such vices, and whose bad faith will never cease to be proverbial among mankind. Egypt at one time, says Strabo, persisted in not opening its ports to the ships of Greece and Thrace; and it was then, continues he, that the Greeks filled Europe with calumnies against the government of the Pharaohs, who, content with the productions of their own country, would no longer either give or receive. But Plato, who apparently had some traffic in Egypt, begins by showing that a nation should cultivate arithmetical knowledge; and then, after some common-place remarks, he insinuates slyly, that the Phenicians and Egyptians had made an ill use of the knowledge they had acquired in calculating and measuring. Independently of this subtlety, it has been observed, that several nations of the south of Asia and Africa have always had an extreme inclination for usury, equivocal contracts, monopolies, and that species of roguery which characterizes the Jews in Europe. They in fact have given a great extension to the precepts of Deuteronomy, which are more conformable to the ancient Nomadic jurisprudence than to that of Egypt. Moses was forced to respect certain usages already observed among the Hebrews, previous to their being

* This might have occasioned the great diversity of torments, which the Greeks and Romans supposed to be employed in their hell.
reduced

reduced to a state of bondage. They were very similar to those established among the Arabs, who have always been famous for their defective laws, and the singularity of their crimes, some of which, like *scopelism*, are sufficient to render a whole province desert*.

Many regulations were invented in Egypt to repress usury, and prevent the violent measures of money-lenders. The greatness of the evil is evident from the very remedy. Among people who have much internal traffic, and scarcely any with strangers, the merchants can only have small profit on their wares; and, therefore, they endeavour to gain largely on money. This produces usury, and the evil increases greatly, when bullion is used instead of coin. We shall find this to have been the case with the Egyptians, who anciently had only an interior commerce. They had not a single ship at sea, while the Nile was covered with a multitude of boats, some of which were made of baked earth. The scarcity of wood there was always extreme, but not more so than the degree of industry it occasioned†.

We are ignorant of the revolutions sustained by commerce at different times in Egypt; but agricul-

* *Scopelism* consisted in placing some stones in the middle of a field, to notify that the first person who attempted to till it would be assassinated. This crime is said to have been peculiar to the Arabs; and it is the consequence of their defective civil laws respecting murder, and the avengers of blood.

† These barks were the smallest kind of *phaseli*, called *barri* by the Egyptians; they went with sails and oars.

*Parvula fœtilibus solitum dare vela phaselis,
Et brevibus pictæ remis incumbere testæ.* Juvenal.

ture

ture appears to have been at all periods very flourishing. The soil required scarcely any other expence than what was necessary for seed; and some grains, such as the *doura*, or millet, like the *orinthis* in Ethiopia, multiply there most abundantly. Tillage was no-where attended with fewer difficulties; and little labor was necessary in conveying moisture to the plantations with machines resembling chain-pumps, which Diodorus seems to have confounded with the screw of Archimedes; who went, says he, to teach that discovery to the Egyptians. The fields, however, were well watered there, long before the days of Archimedes, whose screw-pump is at this day totally unknown from Cairo to the Cataract of the Nile. Thus we perceive how easy it was for the husbandmen of Egypt to repair their losses, after having suffered under tyrants, whose hatred to the laws extended afterwards to the inhabitants. In our climates, on the contrary, agriculture is attended with much greater expence in men, cattle, and instruments. When the farmers are half ruined by imposts, they can never recover themselves by the crops; for it is demonstrated, that the lands always bear less in proportion as the property of the cultivator increases. Reiterated labor and manure require considerable expenditure; but articles of that nature, so important with us, are scarcely counted for any thing in Egypt. This explains clearly why that country has supported better than any other the destructive government of the Turks; and for the same reason it might be rendered flourishing in a century, while

while more than three hundred years would be requisite to produce the same effect on Greece.

Although our notions concerning the ancient division of lands in Egypt are very confined, yet we know with certainty, that the military portions, some of which consisted of twelve arouræ, passed from fathers to sons, and not to daughters. It follows, therefore, that the Greeks spoke at random, when they pretended that, according to the jurisprudence of Egypt, daughters alone were obliged in every case to maintain their parents, when old and infirm. But the obligation in fact extended only to affording that attendance, which was out of the power of their brothers, who, in the military and sacerdotal families, were frequently long absent. The soldiers were to do duty round the palace, every second year in rotation: the priests were liable to be sent to Thebes to administer justice, or to discharge the functions of their ministry; and then it was impossible for them to pay particular attention to what passed in the bosom of their families. It is not necessary to repeat here what has been already said of the condition of the women in Egypt, nor the laws relative to polygamy, and the degrees of affinity which prevented marriage. We have clearly proved that the union of brother and sister never took place there, until after the death of Alexander. All the authors who speak of that circumstance, such as Diodorus, Philo, Seneca, and Pausanias, are very modern in comparison with the ancient Egyptians. Philo, however, is the only one who pretends that such marriages

could be contracted even between a brother and his twin sister*. We find, therefore, that this few imagined twins to be more closely related than brothers and sisters born successively. But the idea was altogether chimerical, and it would have been absurd to make this exception, when all the Greeks of Alexandria were permitted to intermarry in the first degree of the collateral lines. Twins have nothing to distinguish them from other children born of the same father and mother, except that one of them is sometimes weakly; and yet this does not happen so constantly that it can be considered as a rule of Nature. Yet if degeneration results from incestuous connexion, the effect must be most obvious on the offspring of a brother and sister who are twins, although such experiments, when made with brutes, have seldom produced any remarkable effects.

Ancient authors would never have lavished so many praises on the legislation of Egypt, had they been sensible of the imperfections of their own. We add here to personal slavery, which requires necessarily so many bad laws, that even the good are corrupted; for one great injustice requires to be supported by many others. It should be established as

* De Spec. Leg. 6. 7.—Selden believed that marriage between brother and sister was first known in Egypt under the Persians: but this is an error. The incest of Cambyses did not concern the Egyptians; and Seneca gives us distinctly to understand, that no person married his sister, except in Alexandria.

an eternal truth and an immutable principle, that slavery is contrary to the law of Nature. Thus we may form an opinion of those legislators, who used their authority and sanction to confirm, instead of abolishing, the abuse. No Egyptian had the power of taking away the life of his slave; and, by drawing a few consequences from this law, the eyes of those, who had fallen into such strange contradictions, should have been opened.

As liberty and life are really inseparable, the master always preserved the power of death while he appeared to be restrained by the law. Few men in any age have been guilty of murdering their slaves, but those who caused them to perish slowly by hard labour were always very numerous. Thus we find that the law can only prevent a master from killing his slaves in one manner, while he has the choice of a thousand others; and in this consists the contradiction.

Every thing relative to freedom by birth among the Egyptians was entirely opposite to the institutions of the Romans, who adopted the abominable maxim, that children should follow the condition of their mothers: but in all countries where polygamy is established, it becomes indispensable that they should receive their rank from their father. No nation had ever more imperfect ideas concerning servitude than the Romans. By the *Claudian senatus-consultum*, we find a woman was liable to lose her liberty (a punishment equal to death), when convicted of any illicit connexion with a slave.

The situations of those reduced to slavery in Egypt were anciently very different; for some, we perceive distinctly, had employments in the houses, whilst others, appointed to till the fields, might be compared to our serfs. As the greater part consisted of strangers, either purchased or made captives, it was necessary to keep them apart, as long as they persisted in their own religion. If admitted as household servants, they would have rendered every thing impure. This institution was, in its nature, so very defective, that it required many bad laws to prevent revolts among such people, who could the more easily form conspiracies as they were not under the eye of their master. It is probable that this occasioned so many extraordinary regulations to prevent murder; and we see, by the case of Moses, that they were not instituted without reason, although unexampled among the rest of mankind. In other countries, not to assist a person against assassins is considered as cowardice; but in Egypt it was a capital crime *. The law for that object, however, could so easily be eluded, that it must have been looked upon as non-extant. Nothing was easier than to allege numberless pretexts, to prove the impossibility of succouring an unfortunate man, already in the hands of robbers. The legislators, sensible of the greatest part of these inconveniencies, proposed that the person, at least, who did not de-

*. Hellodorus seems to insinuate, that the same law was found among the Ethiopians, and that it concerned even the children who were found, when exposed to perish.

nounce

nounce the aggressors, should remain some time in prison, and receive a certain number of stripes. But this law appears to have been annulled under the Ptolemies, when they entrusted the composition of their code to Demetrius of Phaleris, who, as every person knows, had to labor for monsters.

It is generally considered as a very whimsical circumstance, that the Egyptians should have had particular physicians for different disorders, and even for the tooth-ach, to which they were subject from chewing green sugar-canes; while the whole country did not contain one barrister, although the pleadings were delivered in writing, according to the Greeks. In that case, however, the priests, who were found in all the towns, must have drawn up the petitions and replies for those who could not read and write; but, in that point, the Egyptians in general seem not to have been deficient *. When the bad custom of citing a heap of authors in juridical cases is not adopted, and no captious reasonings are introduced, such papers can be discussed very promptly, and the Egyptians were never allowed to present more than four in the course of one process. The judges, on their side, consulted only ten volumes, and of these they com-

* According to the Egyptian laws, it was a great advantage to be able to read and write; and even artificers gave this part of education to their children. The Judaic laws supposed also the frequent use of writing, as well for the genealogies of the tribes as for contracts, bills of divorce, &c. But the Jews neglected education greatly; and, in some of the small towns, the *schoterim* were the only people who could read or write.

mitted the greater part to memory *. Extraordinary cases, which had no place in this code, were decided by a plurality of voices ; and it appears, by the monument now extant in Thebais, that the number of judges was uneven. Thus the president did not turn the image of Truth to either side, unless when the votes were equally divided. It would have been absurd to decide in favor of those who had not obtained this equality, because the arbitraty procedure, which was chiefly intended to be avoided, would then have been admitted. The plurality of suffrages attracted always to their side the emblem of Truth ; and in that manner the process was terminated. No bastinadoes were ever given there to the pleaders. But the Chinese smother more law-suits than they decide judicially ; because their government is despotic, and that of the Egyptians was monarchic, as may be demonstrated beyond contradiction.

It appears also, that, among the Egyptians, some points were referred to oath ; and not one word in their whole history gives reason to suppose that they ever employed torture. Under the dominion of the Greeks and Romans, experience proved that such means were ineffectual to obtain a confession from people, whose obstinacy was excessive. Thus an institution, which is abominable in any country, would have been useless in Egypt. Men of melancholy and gloomy

* Diodorus speaks only of eight volumes to which the judges applied ; but here two volumes are spoken of, which the prophets had to study.

consti-

constitution, when exposed to a violent degree of pain, soon lose all sensibility; they suffer less in proportion as the convulsion augments; and it was perhaps from physical causes, that the Egyptians rejected the torments of hell, and believed only in purgatory. As, in certain cases, solemn depositions were admitted as proofs of facts, it became necessary to place perjury in the number of capital crimes. Murder belonged always to the same class, except when a father killed his own child; and then his punishment consisted in holding publicly the dead body in his arms during three days: but the parricide had to suffer the most dreadful execution ever exhibited in that country*. This likewise has been supposed, without reason, to discover some connexion with what is practised by the Chinese. The greater part of ancient nations entertained similar sentiments; and we have to lament that some should have been so barbarous and unjust as to chastise imaginary crimes, such as heresy and sorcery, by more cruel punishments than those inflicted on the depraved wretch who plunged a dagger into the heart of a parent. On the other hand, the Egyptians were certainly to blame for not preserving some proportion in the manner of testifying the abhorrence of the murder of a father and of a son. When Nature has established an evident relation, it should always be

* This punishment consisted in piercing the body of the criminal with reeds, and burning him in thorns. It has no resemblance whatever to the method of cutting a person into a thousand pieces, practised in China, where it is supposed to be a more modern invention.

respected by the legislator. We must however acknowledge, that the notions of the Egyptians, with regard to paternal authority, were less defective than those of the Greeks and Romans. But the Chinese appear to have always had the shocking maxim, that children should not be considered as human beings, until they had received their mothers' milk. This opinion, according to a learned lawyer, prevailed likewise among the ancient Romans *; and it appears no difficult matter to assign the cause. Infanticide could be committed only by the father, according to the decree of Romulus, and then with the consent of the mother. From this proceeded the barbarous distinction between children who had sucked, and those never admitted to the breast. When the mother once began to nurse her child, she was considered as intending to preserve it; and then infanticide could no longer be allowed even with the consent of both parties. Those, who possessed such bad morals, must necessarily have had worse physics; and the prejudice was thus established, that children began to be human beings only when they received the breast.

The great deference shown by the Egyptians towards old men, was common to all the most ancient nations of the earth. It is the only respect known in savage life; and civil government originated through its influence, and not from paternal authority, which could never extend beyond a family. Royalty is de-

* Ger. Noodt, de Partus Expositione et Nect apud Veteres. Liber singularis.

rived from the power of the caciques, or captains, chosen by the old men to command expeditions where they themselves could not act. This appeared to me most evidently, when my studies were directed to trace the origin of social life in America, where, from being more modern, it is less obscure.

As the ancient inhabitants of our continent in general have given by far too much latitude to paternal power; had this, instead of the authority of the old men, been the foundation of government, a real despotism would have resulted in the state, as well as in each family. Yet we find no such effects in any country; and, if the Chinese pretend the contrary, they are grossly mistaken. When one hundred and twenty kings, or great caciques, reigned in China, not one of them all dared to call himself *father and mother of the state*: but as soon as the emperors, by force of arms and every species of injustice, had expelled the kings, they assumed whatever titles suited their fancy. Thus the case of the Chinese was exactly the same with that of the Romans; when they had *fathers of the country*, their liberty was gone. Let all the dictionaries and languages of the world be examined, and they cannot lead to the slightest idea that ever, unless in a figurative sense, the title of *king* had any connexion with that of *father*.

The government of ancient Egypt was really monarchic by the form of its constitution. Limits were fixed to the sovereign power; the order of succession in the royal family was regulated, and the administration of justice entrusted to a particular body, whose
credit

credit could counterbalance the authority of the Pharaohs. The king had no right to judge or pronounce in any civil cause, and the judges, at their installation, contracted the most solemn engagement not to obey him, in case he ordered them to issue an unjust sentence. Besides the college of thirty, stationary at Thebes, and the particular magistrates of towns who pronounced in certain cases *, the provinces sent deputies at times to meet in the labyrinth, and discuss affairs of state, supposed to be relative to taxation. Diodorus Siculus assures us, that the kings of Egypt could not tax their subjects arbitrarily, which, he observes, is the greatest scourge of other states; and then he insinuates, that the sacerdotal class had the inspection of the finances. This leaves room to suppose, that the consent of the provinces was necessary for levying new imposts.

We now see the error of maintaining, that the ancients had no idea of true monarchical government. Mr. Montesquieu perceived no traces of it among them, because he did not look where they were to be found; and he stops to consider the kings of some states of ancient Greece, who pronounced sentences in civil causes. But this usage, so opposite to the

* Anciently, says Orus Apollo, the magistrates of Egypt judged and saw the king naked—*Regem nudum spectabat*. The meaning of this is obscure; and Mr. de Pauw, canon of Utrecht, does not seem to have understood the 39th chapter of Hieroglyphics, on which he has given notes. When the king came to the assembly of judges, he had to lay aside his cloak or upper garment, called *calasiris*; probably, to show that he did not judge himself.

principles

principles of monarchy, was never practised in Egypt. We speak here of the actions of princes, and not of tyrants.

According to a fundamental law in that country, royalty was incompatible with the pontificate*. When the servile despotism of the nations inhabiting warm climates is considered, as well as what the men of such countries dare attempt, and how much they can suffer, we are led to admire the wisdom of the Egyptians in opposing this barrier to despotism. The want of similar precautions brought ruin on the nations of Asia, where the princes got possession of the priesthood, or rendered it removable, as in Turkey and Persia. The muftis and sudres are as little certain of preserving their dignity, as the high-priests of the Jews, who, towards the close of that monarchy, seldom held the priesthood during three years. Such slaves are incapable of defending the rights of the people, because they cannot protect themselves; and if their destiny did not depend on the caprice of the prince, it would be determined by the intrigues of the seraglio. In Egypt, on the contrary, the pontiffs were always permanent, and the eldest son constantly succeeded his father in that office, nearly in the same manner that it remained in the family of Aaron, before the Hebrews became the sport of despots.

* As Herodotus saw the statues of all the kings, and those of all the pontiffs in particular, it may be considered as a proof that, before the time of *Sethon*, no pontiff was ever king. Perhaps, *Sethon* would not abdicate the pontificate when he came to the throne.

At

At length, however, from some cause unknown to us, it happened in Egypt that Sethon, who inherited the priesthood, attained the throne likewise. The two powers being thus united in the same person, the state became so completely overturned, that it could never afterwards be replaced in its former equilibrium. The soldiers murmured, because some of their lands were confiscated; and the people complained that the military had betrayed the country at a moment when particular interests should have yielded to the public good. In the midst of these troubles, that the mass of power might be divided, twelve governors were chosen to reign jointly. But this oligarchic constitution could not re-establish the monarchy, because it was never effectual even in a republic, although so frequently tried in ancient times. The result of this was real despotism, which continued from the time of *Psammetichus* to the invasion of *Cambyfes*. All those princes kept in pay a crowd of mercenaries, who, ever since the world existed, have been the instruments and support of arbitrary power. At this epoch should be fixed the evident change which took place in the character of the Egyptians, who then began to hate their kings. Even *Amasis*, to whom they were in appearance reconciled, had to keep a strong Greek garrison in Memphis, to guard himself in the midst of his dominions against subjects, who had once been enthusiastic in their attachment to the Pharaohs. They pardoned many vices and weaknesses in those princes, and even allowed them to reign, when deprived of fight, as we find from several instances; for the Egyptians

tians were much afflicted with cecity. It is surprising that in other eastern empires, particularly in Persia, Mogul, and Turkey, where the blind might be capable of governing, a quite contrary regulation has been established. Were any thing of the kind now to happen in the monarchies of Europe, the lawyers would most probably be puzzled to solve the difficulty; but the Egyptians founded their conduct on birth-right, which, among them, was sacred and inviolable. They conceived it therefore to be unjust to deprive a person of his patrimony on account of an indisposition, already sufficiently fatal in itself. This might be admitted with regard to private successions; but, when the obligation of governing a people was annexed, they should at least have given tutors to their blind princes, among whom we find the children of Sesostris and Pharaoh Anyfis. Were we to believe Herodotus, it would appear that the cecity of the latter in particular may be considered as having been productive of misfortunes; for it was in his reign that the Persians invaded Egypt*.

When the reigning family was extinct, the crown became elective; and we have all the formalities used on such occasions minutely described by Synesius. The soldiers and priests alone had active and passive votes, although Diodorus pretends that the rest of the

* The name of Pharaoh Anyfis is not found in the dynasties of Manetho, because it was merely borrowed. Bocchoris is generally believed to be the same person with Anyfis. Cecity, however, was not incurable in Egypt, and this might have influenced the legislator.

people

people were equally noble with the military and sacerdotal tribes. But he should at least have excepted that unfortunate class, so much detested in Egypt, and not even permitted to enter the temples. We have already spoken of those men, who appear to me to have been Africans of a foreign origin. They spoke amongst themselves the Punic language, and were held by the Egyptians in a state between personal slavery and liberty. This was likewise the case with the Helots at Lacedæmon, the Corynophores at Sicyon, the Penestes in Thessaly, the Clarotes in Crete, the Gymnites in different parts of Greece, the Prospelates in Arcadia, the Leleges in Caria, the Mariandynes at Heraclea, and finally the Jews, who, after the expulsion of the shepherd kings, were exactly in the same condition. Herodotus says positively, that the Punic language was spoken in the neighbourhood of the town of Apis, and the lake Mareotis, amongst certain families subjected to the Egyptians *. This cast, so much abhorred by the Egyptians, formed at length, according to every opinion, the republic of robbers; and Strabo describes the little monarchy of the Jews as degenerated likewise into a confederation of banditti. We have reason to believe, that slaves, employed in cultivating the earth, are liable to contract a peculiarly bad character. Several societies have

* The language spoken of here must not be confounded with the Carthaginians. It was properly the Libyan idiom. As the Egyptians came originally from Ethiopia; they neither understood Arabic, Libyan, Phenician, nor the jargon of the Jews, which seems to have been a dialect of the latter.

been

been formed in America by negroes, who escaped from the planters; but their policy and laws are always so wretched, that, like the Paulists, they become republics of thieves.

As the military in Egypt were far more numerous than the priests of the first and second rank, the prophets had a vote equal to one hundred foldiers, the comastæ to twenty, and the zacori to ten *. All the measures taken to procure tranquillity in those critical times, when the state floated between contending parties, could not prevent the elections from being frequently disturbed by the intrigues of the candidates. Some traces of this confusion are supposed to be found in the history of the seventy Pharaohs, who reigned during as many days, probably from having disputed concerning the plurality of votes. This story could not have been founded, as people pretend, on an irruption of foreign enemies, who in less than three months inflicted death on seventy of the governors of Egypt. The whole number of prefectories did not exceed twenty-seven, as we perceive by the construction of the labyrinth, where the deputies of the different nomes assembled, previously to the conquest of the Persians †.

* *Pro lato alicujus ex candidatis nomine, militis quidem manus tollunt, comastæ vero et zacori et propheta calculos ferunt; pauci aliqui; sed quorum præcipua est ea in re auctoritas, prophetarum nempe; calculus centum manus æquat. Comastarum viginti, zacorum decem. Syn. de Providen.*

† This number is found in all the copies of Strabo; but, in my opinion, the nomes consisted only of twelve great, and as many small.

In.

In very ancient times, the kings were consecrated at Thebes; but that strange ceremony was afterwards performed at Memphis. The prince carried the yoke of the bull *Apis*, and a sceptre made like the Theban plough, used at this day in cultivating the fields of Sais, and some parts of Arabia, as we find by the figure published by Mr. Niebuhr *. Thus equipped, he was led through a part of the town, and thence to the *Adyton*, which seems to have been a vault. Father Martini, by the most whimsical idea possible, supposes it to have been the town of *Abydos*, eighty-three leagues distant from Memphis. That man must have imagined that the same mode prevailed in Egypt as in his own country, where the kings go from Paris to Rheims to be consecrated.

When a prince was elected from the military class, he passed, at the moment of his inauguration, into the priesthood, and this required some particular ceremonies most probably as well as oaths. The Pharaohs could in no case dispense, as we have already observed, with swearing that they would neither intercalate a day nor a month in the undetermined year, to render it fixed or lunary. In this point they kept

* Scholiaft. German. in Arat. The Scholia of Aristophanes, on the Comedy of the Birds, say, that, on the top of the sceptre of the Egyptian kings, was the figure of a stork, and, on the other end, the figure of a hippopotamus. But they seem to have had different kinds of sceptres, according to what is handed down by the ancients; and the most common of all represented a plough. This was carried by the kings, as well as by the priests of Egypt and Ethiopia.

their

their word more religiously than in many others of much greater consequence.

As those, who attained the throne by the voice of the soldiers and priests, always gave the name of the town where they were born, and not that of their family, to the new dynasty, it is not extraordinary to find in history the Pharaohs of Elephantis. Chronologists, by not attending to this natural fact, have been forced to invent a particular monarchy in the little island of Elephantis, which was not more extensive than a country-seat in Europe with walks and gardens. The valley of Egypt grows very narrow immediately above the town of Ombos; and by even allowing this pretended kingdom all the territory on the banks of the Nile, it could never be independent either of the kings of Ethiopia or of Egypt.

Marsham is the first author who ever pretended, that Egypt consisted anciently of several kingdoms; and it is to be lamented, that a man, who had acquired so much erudition, should have been deficient in genius and judgment. He was persecuted by fanatics as an unbeliever; and never was any man more credulous; for he pretended that the Egyptian monarchy had been founded in the year immediately following the deluge; and what he relates of *Cham*, who is called by him the first king of the Egyptians, is more worthy of a Jewish rabbin than an English chronologist. Neither *Cham* nor *Mesraim* was ever spoken of in ancient Egypt, which undoubtedly derives its name from the word *Kypt*; and De Hoorn believes, that the same appellation was common to a

part of Ethiopia *. Unfortunately, too many writers have introduced Jewish traditions into history; and, from that circumstance, the progress of knowledge has been greatly retarded.

The Egyptians undoubtedly in some points exaggerated their antiquity. When they speak of persons who lived a thousand years, it is clear, says Pliny, that they at first counted by lunations †. But, in fact, the period attributed to the life of one person might be the duration of a dynasty or family, according to the manner of speaking in the East. Let it be supposed, that the tribe of *Beni-Wassel* had been scattered throughout the heights of Thebais during six centuries; the Arabs, who never count by the lives of individuals, would say, that the age of *Beni-Wassel* was six hundred years. This invariable manner of bearing the name of their founder, is well adapted to preserve the epoch of a race of men, who have no archives. The same mode may perhaps be found among the free hordes of Tartars; but those who are subjected, preserve only the genealogy of their kans, whose families become frequently extinct.

* Bochart has abused De Hoorn, without any necessity, concerning what he says of the Ethiopians. Although the Greeks coined the word *Aithiops* to denote a race of black people, the derivation of it might perhaps be concealed in the term *Kopt* or *Kypt*.

† *Annum enim alii estate unum determinabant et alterum hyeme. . . . Quidam lunæ senio ut Ægyptii, itaque apud eos aliqui et singula annorum vixisse millia produntur.* Lib. 7.—“ I have decked my bed with tapestry and linen of Egypt.” Proverbs, chap. vii.

The

The Dynasties of Manethon, however, are not necessary to prove the great antiquity of the Egyptians; for it is demonstrated by the progress they had made in the arts in very distant ages. At the conquest of the Macedonians, they were so far advanced, that nothing was wanting to the greatest degree of perfection, but that elegance and niceness of taste, which can never be attained by the inhabitants of the East, because of their defective organs, and disordered imagination. The manufactures of glass and tapestry, so celebrated under the Ptolemies, had been established long before the days of those princes; and the carpets of Egypt particularly formed part of the merchandise transported into Asia by the isthmus of Suez. Of this more shall be said, when we come to examine what might have been the annual revenues of the Pharaohs, to whom the first legislators of Egypt had prescribed many rules and maxims preserved in the Hermetic Collection. From that book the passages in Diodorus were probably extracted, which declare that these princes could never keep slaves, whether born in Egypt, or purchased in foreign countries. They were required to take their attendants from children of priests, who did not enter into the service of the court until they had attained their twentieth year. This law was far from being observed; for when the Pharaohs introduced slaves into their seraglio, they committed them to the care of eunuchs, who were certainly neither freemen, nor chosen out of the sacerdotal class. Diodorus pretends likewise, that the kings were obliged to peruse all the letters they received,

S 2

ceived, to attend prayers daily, and hear some passage read in the Annals of the country. Many pretexts might however have been found for dispensing with such ceremonies, when the allurements of pleasure, or idleness, which is the greatest enjoyment in warm climates, rendered them irksome.

It cannot be too frequently repeated, that, in reading the history of Egypt, the laws really in force should be distinguished from the ancient institutions found only in books. Had this not been the case, the priests could never have spoken of a long list of indolent kings, who slumbered in seraglios, and received, like the rest, sepulchral honors. We have reason to believe, contrary to the common opinion, that the people never possessed the right of refusing burial. Such a custom would not have produced any good effect in Egypt, where the father was always succeeded on the throne by his eldest son, as long as the royal family remained. In that case, the young prince must have been the implacable enemy of those who refused to let his father be interred; and it was, besides, an easy matter for him to have the mummy conveyed secretly into some vault.

Diodorus indeed says, that the Pharaohs, who, according to him, constructed the two great pyramids, had not dared to have their bodies deposited there, through fear that they might be thrown out by the people; but this was a vulgar report, totally unknown to Herodotus. Very little reflection is necessary to perceive that those princes must have had more sense than to rear pyramids for their tombs, while they

they knew so well that their interment there was impracticable. The Greeks, having once taken into their heads that the pyramids were the tombs of the Pharaohs, would never allow themselves to be persuaded to the contrary, although the Egyptians declared positively that no corpse of any king was ever deposited in any of the pyramids, and that those monuments were erected by the nation, and not by particular princes. History contains one fact very decisive in proving that the Egyptians never thought of refusing burial to their bad kings. One of the despotic Pharaohs, called *Apries*, who was supposed to have committed many atrocious crimes, incurred the resentment of the people to such a great degree, that they insisted on having him delivered into their hands, when he was vanquished by Amasis. After he had been strangled in their fury, his body was placed in the tomb of his fathers, at the entrance of the temple of the Minerva of *Sais*, where all the Pharaohs of the Saite tribe were deposited.

The opinion hazarded by some modern writers, concerning the anonymous kings found in the Catalogue of Dynasties, should not be credited. They pretended that their names were suppressed, because their hands had been sullied with blood, or ill-acquired riches. As the memory of tyrants must be devoted to execration in every age, it would be rendering them a service to efface them entirely from the annals. But the priests, who were not so silly, wrote both names and events with great fidelity*.

* Euseb. Præpar. Evang. lib. 10.

Bad princes no longer fear future censure, since flattery has succeeded in corrupting historical faith; and this evil originated among the Greeks and Romans. If the Catalogue of the Dynasties contains some anonymous persons, that circumstance should be attributed to the negligence of the compilers. Eusebius, for example, has omitted the names of several Pharaohs preserved by Julius Africanus; and we know to a certainty that the History of Manethon mentions *Achthoes* as the most cruel and unjust of all the kings of Egypt. Thus we find how little the priests were disposed to suppress the names of tyrants; otherwise, the monster *Achthoes* must have been now unknown. Orus Apollo assures us, that, when the name of a wicked king was to be inserted in hieroglyphical records, it was ordained to be written in alphabetical characters*. The priests denoted foreign usurpers by symbolical terms familiar to all the people; and every Egyptian knew that the king of Persia, called by us *Ochus*, was surnamed among them the *Afs*.

According to a very ancient custom, the high priest had to pronounce a public discourse when the corpse of a king was carried to the tomb, after a mourning of seventy days, which we know was the precise time necessary for the embalmers to prepare the mummy. In this harangue consisted the judgment

* *Regem autem pessimum significantes, anguem pingunt in oculis figuram; cujus caudam ori admovent: nomen vero regis in media revolutione scribunt.* Hiero, lib. 1.—Alphabetical characters are sometimes seen with the hieroglyphics on the monuments; and of this what Orus says here is a proof.

passed

passed on the dead Pharaohs, who were praised for different qualities, but chiefly, as Porphyry says, for sobriety, because that virtue supposes many others, particularly in sovereigns.

Private people were probably never refused burial, unless when the creditors opposed it juridically. This made the Greeks imagine that people were found among the Egyptians, who advanced money on an embalmed body, and that the contract was justified by law. This mistake is truly ridiculous. As the want of burial was considered as a species of infamy, the creditor arrested the corpse of the debtor, and did not allow it to be buried until the relations paid the debt. Such pretensions could be discussed before the ordinary magistrate of every town; and it was absurd to suppose that one tribunal, established at Memphis, had to acquit or condemn all those who died in Egypt. It was besides alleged, that the sentence could not be pronounced until after a rigid examination of the whole life of each person; and this, instead of a single tribunal, would have required one-fourth of the nation. In fact, the power of seizing on the dead body of a debtor was only a modification of the Egyptian law, which prevented him from being imprisoned while alive.

As the Pharaohs were generally instructed in the sciences from their infancy, many of them wrote books; but they have had the misfortune to be entirely destroyed. This has been the case with so many of the kings of antiquity, that we are almost tempted to believe, that their productions were not worthy of

being preserved. The works of Alexander the Great, of the emperor Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Ptolemy Philometer, Archelaus, and many other princes, to whom might be added Hannibal, Lucullus, Sylla, and Mecænas, are so entirely lost, that even the titles of the greater part are unknown. The least part of the writings of Julius Cæsar now remain, and a kind of veneration for the memory of Marcus Aurelius and Julian has made them exceptions to the general rule. Yet, in the days of Pliny, some books were still found with the name of *Necepsos*; but whatever Firmicus may say to the contrary, those works seem to have been produced in later ages by some famished Greek, who boldly took the name of Pharaoh *Necepsos*. That prince received the most pompous titles from the astrologers; they styled him the chief of authors, and superlatively learned in astrology, because he had really written on the influence of the stars. His works are therefore not so much to be regretted as those of some other Pharaohs, who appear to have been truly desirous of information; yet we must not believe that they ever made such experiments as Herodotus has attributed to *Psammetichus*. That prince, says he, caused two infants to be reared, without having an opportunity of hearing any conversation: his object in this was to know what language the children would use, that he might terminate all the contests of the inhabitants of Egypt and Phrygia, concerning their respective antiquity. Herodotus was credulous enough to believe that the first word they spoke was Phrygian.

Those,

Those, who are desirous of knowing the origin of this absurd story, may be satisfied that it was founded simply on the circumstance of Psammeticus having given some Egyptian children to be instructed in the language of the Greeks. With regard to the Phrygians, they were ridiculed with the name of *Baccotens*, on account of their pretended antiquity: they called themselves older than the moon, and cited, as a proof of their pretensions, the experiment made in Egypt, when the children uttered the word *beccos* *.

The predominating passion of the Pharaohs was building; and this led to the erroneous opinion of their great riches. Under their sway no commerce was carried on either in the Mediterranean or Red Sea; and, although the Arabs and Phenicians brought caravans through the isthmus of Suez, yet the balance of that trade was not always in favor of the Egyptians. Asia furnished them with oil of olives, incense for the sacrifices and fumigations, Judaic bitumen, resin of cedar, drugs for embalming bodies, myrrh, and aromatics. Such articles were never cheap in ancient times. Thus when we suppose that the Egyptians, by means of their grain, linen, tapestry, glass, and other wrought wares, could barter with the caravans of Asia, it was not a source sufficient to enrich the kings, who levied no imposts on the land possessed by the militia or the sacerdotal class. Their only resource was in cultivating the royal do-

* This word signifies bread in Phrygian, which I believe was called *bebo* in the Egyptian language. The difference between this and *beccos* was not very great.

mains,

mains, exacting a trifling toll on the Nile, and taxing to a certain degree the property of private persons. The commerce of Ethiopia was certainly very advantageous for the Egyptian merchants, who received thence great quantities of gold dust, part of which now passes to the western coast of Africa; some circulates in Barbary; and the rest still comes to Cairo. Mr. Maillet, however, exaggerates greatly, when he calculates the gold transported annually into Egypt by the Numidian caravans at twelve hundred quintals. Bosman says positively, that, in his time, all the coast of Guinea afforded only seven thousand marks, which Mr. Maillet, or his compiler, the abbé Mascrier, has converted into quintals *. The ancients amplified nearly in the same proportion what related to Arabia Felix: that poor and barren country has frequently excited admiration in the inhabitants of other countries, who would lose prodigiously by an exchange.

Nothing is more uncertain than the existence of those gold mines, said to have been possessed by the kings of Egypt. Hecateus estimates their product, in his common way, at an incredible sum; and Diodorus places them on the confines of Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt. Their situation must therefore have been nearly the same with that of the emerald mines, and, consequently, beyond the territory of the Egyptians. That district belonged either to the Troglodytes or Ethiopians: and it was really the latter who collected the gold among the sand of rivers and torrents, or

* Description of Egypt, part ii.

procured

procured it in the manner [now practised by the Africans.

In fact, the revenues of the Pharaohs were far from amounting to twelve hundred thousand pounds sterling annually, prior to the reign of *Psanmetichus*, who made great changes in the finances, and in commerce. Under the Ptolemies, Egypt had the whole commerce of India, of the eastern coast of Africa, Arabia, and Ethiopia, besides what was derived from the navigation of the Mediterranean. Yet the annual revenue of Ptolemy Auletes did not exceed two millions four hundred and twenty-two thousand pounds. But, as that prince was said to have neglected his finances more than any of his predecessors, we shall examine the state of the revenues under Ptolemy Philadelphus, when Egypt, according to historians, was exceedingly flourishing.

Philadelphus received every year two millions eight hundred and sixty-seven thousand pounds in money, and fifteen millions of small measures of wheat*. Thus from his reign to that of Ptolemy Auletes, father to Cleopatra, the derangement of the finances had produced a diminution of only four hundred and forty-five thousand pounds. This was far from being an object so considerable as Strabo pretends; and Philadelphus must have had other important possessions out of Egypt, otherwise he could never have maintained such an army as is mentioned by Appian†.

* Iero on the ninth Chapter of Daniel. The number of measures of grain seems exaggerated.

† Præf. ad Libros Bellor. Civil.

The registers of the court of Alexandria make the whole armed force to have consisted of two hundred and forty thousand men, who, if maintained and paid as at the present day, would have consumed three millions and a half annually. It is very possible that the troops were not so numerous; for, besides the suspicions suggested by Polybius, many are persuaded that Appian doubled the real number of horses. That man was born in Alexandria, and he lied for the honor of his country.

When Egypt was shut towards the Arabian gulph, as well as the Mediterranean, the revenues of the Pharaohs could never have amounted to twelve hundred thousand pounds. It should be observed, that the Ptolemies seem to have reserved the commerce of India for their private advantage; and the wares of others had to pay very heavy duties at different ports on the Nile. Thus Philadelphus received the greatest part of his riches from another source than Egypt, which did not then contain more than three millions of inhabitants. Josephus was guilty of an unpardonable error in making its population amount to eight millions in the reign of Nero, after all the miseries the country had suffered under the last Ptolemies and the first Cæsars.

We do not here make any allowance for the difference which some have imagined in the value of specie; for it must then have been nearly the same as at present. The quantity is now indeed much greater; but the circulation has also become far more extensive than in former times. When Philadelphus reigned
in

in Egypt, the use of gold and silver was scarcely known in France, Spain, and England ; but those metals had no circulation whatever in either Germany, Poland, Sweden, or Denmark. As specie was then concentrated among the nations inhabiting the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean, that abundance prevented any great augmentation of its value.

That the riches of the ancient Pharaohs have been greatly exaggerated must appear from the following direct proof. Herodotus, in a specification of the tributes levied by Darius, son of Hytaspes, on the countries he had subdued, mentions the contribution of Assyria, including Babylon, as consisting of one thousand talents, and five hundred emasculated children annually for the use of the seraglio. But the whole of Egypt, Barca, Cirene, and another canton of Africa, had to pay altogether only seven hundred talents. That sum indeed was exclusive of the supplies in grain for maintaining an hundred and twenty thousand Persians, and the produce of the fisheries on the lake *Mæris* ; but the last article was never equal to what the Greeks have childishly imagined. This sum, however, was very trifling in comparison of what Egypt must have paid, had the Pharaohs possessed such enormous finances ; for Darius certainly preserved some proportion between the tribute and the revenues of the respective states.

Those who have written hitherto on Egypt, pretend, that it was greatly enriched by the spoils Sesostris had brought from his expedition, when he laid the whole habitable world under contribution. But this

this error originated from the interpreters, who, in showing strangers the temples and monuments of Egypt, imposed on them with fables, which increased by repetition. Diodorus says, that Sesostris appeared in the streets of his capital drawn by the deputies of the sovereigns of the earth; and Lucan went still farther, by making him harness the kings themselves. In this manner fictions are spread abroad, and people are always found to exaggerate what others have dreamed.

The three first Ptolemies really occasioned the opulence of Egypt by concentrating the greatest commerce then known on the ancient continent. As this wealth was founded on articles of the most destructive luxury, some able politicians at Rome invented an oracle of the Sibyls, forbidding the Romans to carry their arms into Egypt; and another equally spurious was said to be delivered at Memphis*. But Augustus, who ridiculed prophecies, did not hesitate to invade Egypt whenever he found an opportunity; and ever since that celebrated epocha, the Romans continued to degenerate, as the politicians had foreseen.

An Egyptian law, transmitted by Diodorus, has led many of the learned to believe that gold and

* *Haud equidem immerito Cumanæ carmine vatæ
Cautum, ne Nili Pelusia tangeret arva
Hesperius miles.*

These verses of the Pharfalia are a paraphrase of the four following words said to be extracted from the books of the Sibyls:
Miles Romane, Ægyptum cave.

silver

silver money had long been used in that country; but nothing is more erroneous than this supposition; for those metals continued to be weighed, as we find practised by those who had to discharge their vows at the temples for the health of their children. The first current coin of Egypt was struck by *Aryandes*, under the dominion of the Persians, who, as Sperling justly observes, had never any great quantity of specie in circulation*. It appears, indeed, that what had been issued was entirely drawn back by the annual tributes; for the Arabs, who search among the ruins of Egypt, and even sift much of the loose sand, have never discovered one single piece. None of the medals found there are older than the reign of Alexander. They either belonged to the Ptolemies, or to the Egyptian towns which were allowed the privilege of having their own coin under the dominion of the Greeks: these were Pelusium, Memphis, Abydus, Thebes, Hermopolis, and the great city of Hieroglyphics†.

Among the different people, to whom the ancients and moderns have attributed the invention of money, the Egyptians were never mentioned, not even by Pollux, who enters into many details on that subject. Count Caylus was certainly deceived, when he believed that small leaves of gold folded together were

* De Nummis non cufis.—Sperling says, that in his time the false shekels were made in Holstein. It is surprising that Ægyptian medals were not forged there likewise.

† Vaillant, Hist. Ptolem. ad Fidem Numismatum accommodata, 104.

used

used there as current coin *. The kind of bracelets, to which he alludes, are only found on the body, or in the mouth of some mummy; and, therefore, they should be considered as amulets either phylacteric, or merely representing the leaves of the persea. The merchants of Egypt were prohibited by law from marking their ingots with a false quality, or weight; and every person could employ scales, as in the payments by shekels, when they were suspected to be too light. It was with the Egyptians, as among the Hebrews, whose shekels were not coined until the building of the second temple; and those nations remained too closely connected for the one to have employed money while it was unknown to the other.

This at first seems to indicate a striking resemblance to the Chinese; but by examining further we perceive it to be precisely the contrary. The historians of China assert, that money was used there in very ancient times; and to support this they have had recourse to the fabrication of false medals. The opinion generally received is, that *Tching-tang*, who is said to have mounted the throne one thousand five hundred and fifty-eight years before our era, caused different metals to be cast in molds to facilitate commerce in the different provinces of his dominions. But afterwards it became necessary to withdraw all the silver and gold pieces out of the hands of the Chinese, because they counterfeited them so exactly, that no person could possibly distinguish any difference. Yet the present method adopted in China is far from hav-

* Collection of Antiquities, vol. ii.

ing

ing entirely corrected that abuse; because they have substituted unjust weights and scales for false bullion. All the merchants there are as cunning in the art of weighing as the Jews and Egyptians; and the same roguery must always take place in every country destitute of current coin. The metal is assayed only by the touch-stone, which never indicates the quality with the nicest precision, in the opinion of the most able judges, who certainly are the Jews. Such is the difference between the Egyptians and Chinese; the first discovered a weakness of penetration in not inventing money, and the latter a want of probity by rendering the use of it impracticable. The gold and silver specie, introduced into the commerce of Egypt by the Greeks, remained always unadulterated, and did not require to be withdrawn, as in China.

The pyramids, the obelisks, the temples, and the exaggerations of Homer, made so many authors believe that the Pharaohs were immensely rich. But the materials of all those works had cost them nothing, and their revenues were sufficient to pay the workmen, who anciently in warm countries did not earn one tenth part of the wages now common in Europe. The rate of labor is always regulated by the expence required for the physical wants of the workman and those of his family. We have already observed how little was necessary for nourishing a child in Egypt, when that country had no exterior commerce, which never fails to affect in some degree the price of provisions; and the grain exported into Asia by the caravans was not of consequence

VOL. II. T enough

enough to be mentioned. The lands, possessed by the Pharaohs in their own right, probably sufficed to pay for the food, and perhaps the clothing, of the laborers; and we may conclude that little other expence was necessary.

Statues of bronze, of gold, silver, and ivory, do not appear to have been in any measure so common in the edifices of Egypt as in those of Greece and Italy; and it is not impossible, that the Athenians expended more money on the statue of Minerva than Pharaoh *Amasis* in hewing and transporting one of the obelisks of *Sais*. When the ancients mention a prodigious circle of gold placed by the Egyptians around the tomb of *Osymandias*, and a statue of the same metal erected in the *Delta*, they confessed that they spoke of those things from hearsay; but the difference is very great between seeing a huge mass of gold and describing it in a romance. The Egyptians were not even permitted to carry gold into the temple of Heliopolis; and the Jews would have acted wisely by observing the same policy; but they continued to heap up treasure in their temple at Jerusalem to be constantly pillaged, as is ever the case where riches are placed in churches.

By the ceremony of the inauguration of the Pharaohs we perceive, that those princes were far from displaying at their court the insulting pomp of the eastern despots. Then surely was the time for the greatest ostentation, and yet the scholiast of Germanicus says, that the kings of Egypt, on that day, wore a very modest tunic, a collar, a sceptre, and a diadem.

diadem. The latter, resembling wreathed serpents, was probably made of gold; and the emperor Titus is supposed to have worn something of the same kind at the consecration of the bull *Apis*. He did not, however, carry the yoke of that animal, like the Pharaohs, because it would have been the signal of revolt against his father, and yet his conduct on that occasion seemed rather suspicious *. As the kings of Egypt conformed themselves scrupulously to the dietetic system until *Psammetichus*, their tables occasioned little expence. They knew well that the first inhabitants of Egypt had not invented that regimen to gratify any principle of austerity, but entirely from motives of health. The same thing was visible in the manner of living adopted by the priests, whose very beds were woven with leaves of the palm-tree, in order to avoid a disorder which would have rendered them impure; and not, as Perlius says, to lay themselves under continual penitence. It was at Rome that those beds of down, so much esteemed in ancient times, were purchased from the Egyptians, who had always the good sense not to employ them for their own use †.

* When Titus crowned himself at the consecration of *Apis*, he was only a private person. *Quam suspicionem, says Suetonius, auxit postquam Alexandriam petens, in consecrando apud Memphim bove Api, diadema gessavit: de more quidem ritumque prisca religionis.* In Tito, vii.

† It is mentioned in an Epigram of Martial, beginning with these words: *Quid totus a Nilo, &c.* This commerce proceeded from the great quantity of geese fed by the Egyptians, as appears in the 2d Section.

We have already had occasion, in a separate Section on the liberal arts, to speak of the ancient manner of dividing the people in Egypt. At present it should be added, that the election of the twelve governors, who were to reign conjointly in that country after the death of Pharaoh *Setbon*, is the strongest proof that the Egyptians were originally divided into twelve castes, of which it is scarcely to be doubted those governors were chiefs, as we find among the tribes of the Jews. But besides this division, another more general was established, according to which the people were considered as forming three great bodies. The same thing is observable with the Coptes, or modern Egyptians, whose *Mebachers* represent the *Calasires* and the *Hermotybes*, or, what is the same thing, the military families. According to Herodotus, they once could have brought into the field four hundred and ten thousand men; but an absurdity of this nature does not require to be refuted.

At a time when money was very scarce, the Egyptians must have been obliged to assign lands to the soldiers; and afterwards, we may suppose, many disputes took place relative to the produce, which, from the diversity of soil, could not be alike on a given space. To remedy this inconvenience, the legislature ordained that the military portions should circulate continually, passing every year from one soldier to another, so that the person, who had at first a bad lot, received afterwards a better. By this operation, the property of lands was entirely taken away from the military order, who were reduced to the

the state of mere usufructuaries. Afterwards a law was made to prevent any soldier from cultivating the ground, following commerce, or exercising mechanical arts.

It is very astonishing indeed, that this disposition of the Egyptian laws should have been introduced in certain books written with the intention of justifying the system of excluding nobility from commerce; for in fact the two cases admit of no resemblance whatever. The *Calafres* and *Hermotybes* were obviously in the pay of the state; and therefore the legislature properly prohibited them, as soldiers, from trading. No person was absurd enough to propose that such of our modern nobility, as serve in the army, should apply themselves to commerce. The idea was confined to those, who, not being employed by the state, could in no manner be compared to the *Calafres* and *Hermotybes*, who were constantly on service. When it is meant to decide political questions by the authority of ancient history, great care should be taken to prove that the cases in question are exactly alike: otherwise nothing can result but a confusion of ideas.

As the inhabitants of lower Egypt are, perhaps, born with greater strength and vigor than those of Thebais, it was so ordered, that the greater part of the military families were found in the *Delta*. The same arrangement has been supposed to have taken place in India, where the military families of the *Rayas* and *Nairs* inhabit likewise the most northern parts of the country.

The establishments of the Egyptian militia comprehended chiefly the town of *Sais*, where Minerva, who was chosen by the soldiers for their guardian, had a famous temple. Thus we find the scarabee sculptured on all the military rings; for that insect was always considered as one of the principal symbols of the Egyptian Minerva. The same goddess in some monuments appeared like the Pallas of the Athenians, who likewise placed their warriors under the protection of that divinity, as the artificers were under that of Vulcan.

With regard to the terms *Calasires* and *Hermotybes*, by which the two corps of Egyptian militia were denoted*, they have hitherto never been satisfactorily interpreted. In my opinion, they were derived solely from the form of the clothing, and not from the armor, the most remarkable part of which was a huge buckler, like that used by the Gauls. In covering the whole body, it impeded every movement; and as the Egyptians formed themselves into platoons to act separately, the enemy pressed them together so closely, that they became incapable of resistance. Cæsar describes a defensive armor of some German people, which occasioned their defeat nearly in the same manner. Large bucklers were generally rejected by the Romans, Greeks, Macedonians, and even

* The word *Calasiris* signifies the garment generally worn in Egypt; and we find the term *Hemitybion* for another particular kind of tunic. The Latin translator fancied that this word was originally Greek; but it has only been corrupted by a Greek termination, as well as *Hermotybies*.

by the Chinese, who sometimes, however, conceal themselves under their shields, by forming a kind of a tortoise.

The bad principles, adopted by the Egyptians in tactics, proceeded in a great measure from their using chariots in war. If we except elephants, nothing is capable of producing more disorder in attacks; and they have been tried and abandoned by almost every nation of the ancient continent. Besides the confusion occasioned by these unwieldy machines, they prevent the advantage which might be derived from the horses in a sandy country, such as the eastern and western parts of the Delta, where the Egyptians encountered so many defeats.

It is generally believed that the Egyptians wore no helmet, and this error has originated from a story related by Herodotus. He pretends to have observed near Pelusium, that the heads of the Persians scattered on an ancient field of battle were much softer than those of the Egyptians, who shaved their hair, and never, according to him, wore any head-dress. But they certainly had helmets of brass, and cuirasses made of flax, like that of Pharaoh *Amasis*, which created admiration in all those who saw them at Samos, and at Lindus in the island of Rhodes, where the most beautiful was consecrated to Minerva. This armor, described by Herodotus, was remarkable for its texture, where each thread was composed of three hundred and sixty-five others, in allusion to the indefinite year; for the Egyptians could never refrain from their allegories, even where they were altogether

ther improper. Although Iphicrates introduced the Egyptian cuirasses among the Athenian militia, yet Pausanias had reason in rejecting them as defective, because, however effectual against swords, or stones thrown from slings, they could not resist a pointed weapon. Besides arms, colors, and instruments of music, the formidable *Galasfires* of Egypt, in all their expeditions, were provided with a number of birds of prey, and principally vultures, for the purpose of divination. Orus Apollo speaks of this custom in several parts of his Hieroglyphics; and it is exactly observed at this day by the *Nairs* and *Rayas* of India, who never give battle when the vultures appear fullen and quiet. The generals most probably have a secret of giving them voracity, when it answers their purpose, by means of opium; and the Marrattoes render their horses so impetuous by the use of that drug, that they are almost irresistible. The Egyptians are said to have had also a very numerous cavalry independent of their armed chariots, the figure of which is seen sculptured on some of the monuments of Thebais. But by reflecting on the regular overflowing of the Nile, it is easy to conceive that the number of horses could never have been very great among the Egyptians, because they could only be employed when the river was within its bed. This inconvenience alone, without mentioning the canals and ditches encountered at every step, must have disgusted them with cavalry; and the force of their armies really consisted in infantry, as we are told by Xenophon.

What

What authors have written concerning Sesostris contains so many contradictions, that we must conclude they spoke at random. Some pretend that his whole life was spent in endeavouring to enervate the military spirit of the Egyptians, by encouraging effeminacy, because he hoped by that means to prevent those revolts so frequent and fatal among the militia of the East. Other historians, such as Aristotle, assert that, on the contrary, he improved the art of war, and gave additional force to discipline. Soldiers in that country were accustomed to be governed by the point of honor, rather than through fear of punishment: they became infamous from disobedience to their chiefs; and nothing but extraordinary proofs of bravery could retrieve their character. The Egyptian army, however, had little to boast of its expedition to Jerusalem; for it was no difficult matter to seduce a pitiful race of men, who were vanquished by the greatest part of those who chose to attack them.

The *Calasires* and *Hermotybes* have been accused of cowardice in actions, where in reality they were not present. According to our opinion, all the national militia retired into Ethiopia in the reign of Psammethichus, and never fought more under the Pharaohs*. Thus they could not have assisted at the siege of *Abot*; which, as Herodotus says, lasted twenty-nine years, and never since the world existed, continues

* Some authors make the number of soldiers who retired to Ethiopia amount to two hundred thousand. But supposing only the half of that number, it follows that all the national militia emigrated.

he,

he, did any place hold out so long ; for the foreign troops in the pay of the kings of Egypt refused to assault the town. It is difficult to say what the *Calasires* and *Hermotybes* would have done on that occasion ; but they lived then peaceably in Ethiopia, and had no part in either the battle with Cambyfes, or any future operations. That prince, at the siege of Pelusium, is said to have formed a line of sacred animals before his troops ; and by that means the Egyptians were prevented from throwing a single dart. But that stratagem is a mere fable. In the first place, Pelusium did not require to be besieged by Cambyfes, for it surrendered at his approach ; and next, it should be observed that the mercenary troops of Caria, Ionia, and Libya, who were then opposed to the Persians, would have troubled themselves very little about animals, not at all connected with their own religion. Thus we find the whole story to be the invention of some writer ignorant of history, who believed that the ancient *Calasires* and *Hermotybes* were still in Egypt, when that country was subdued by the son of Cyrus.

In China, the left side has always been considered as the post of honor ; but the right had the preference in Egypt. Pharaoh *Psammetichus*, who violated at once all laws and usages, formed the right wing of his army with the foreign troops, and assigned the left for the *Calasires* and *Hermotybes*. Those unfortunate people, considering themselves dishonored by the unjust preference given to famished Greeks and faithless mercenaries, abandoned Egypt ; although the inhabitants of that country were never accustomed

came to emigrate, as we learn from Clemens of Alexandria*.

Herodotus, speaking of this retreat of the Egyptian soldiers, does not agree exactly with Diodorus, who attributes their discontent entirely to the affront they had received. The former pretends that they had been left during three years in the garrison of Thebais by *Pfammeticus*, who would not allow them to leave those quarters; but his account seems improbable, and he has besides been notoriously deceived, when he places the establishment they formed so far in the interior part of Ethiopia. It seems almost certain that they settled on the banks of the *Astaboras*, and opened a passage for the water of that river into the Red Sea. This artificial drain is not said to have affected the water of the Nile, because the diminution was, perhaps, too inconsiderable to be perceived.

The project of turning the Nile into the Red Sea, and of rendering Egypt uninhabitable, does not seem to have been unknown to the ancients. This is the opinion of Mr. Maas, that truly learned and estimable author, who has produced the best work now extant on the geography of Palestine. Claudian, who was born in Egypt, gives us some notion of the possibility of changing the course of the Nile; but nothing of the kind was attempted until the tenth century; and what is related on that occasion appears to me as fabulous. Elmacin and Father Lallier assert that, under the kalifship of *Münstanfir*, the water was completely turned away from Egypt by dikes and sluices,

* Stromat. p. 354.

and

and the inhabitants began to fear a famine. As the patriarchs of Alexandria are the real metropolitans of Ethiopia, where they are represented by an *Abuna*, Michael the third was prevailed upon to carry presents to the Ethiopians, and he succeeded in having the works destroyed.

It is not easy to conceive how the Ethiopians could have been at that time sufficiently versed in the arts to execute such undertakings. Towards the year one thousand five hundred and twenty-five, *Ezana Denghel*, who was emperor of Ethiopia, sent an ambassador to Lisbon, requesting the king of Portugal to assist him with a number of European pioneers and architects, for the purpose of preventing any water from descending into Egypt. This monarch pretended that one of his predecessors, called *Lalibala* by Ludolph, had endeavoured to execute the same project by opening a canal opposite Suakem. That place is about an hundred miles distant from the Nile, according to the Portuguese, who were incapable of accomplishing the intended object; and we know that they did not even make a beginning. In the year one thousand seven hundred and six, *Teklimanout*, calling himself king of Abyssinia, threatened the pacha of Cairo with destroying Egypt by drying up the Nile*. But it was easier for an Abyssinian to speak in this manner to a Turk, than to execute any project of that nature.

It is not at Suakem, as the Portuguese believed, but more to the south, in the eighteenth degree, that the surface of the country begins to form a continual

* Continuation of Lobo's Voyage.

descent

descent to the very shore of the Red Sea. At that place the water of the *Asaborns*, or *Tacane*, might be prevented from falling into the Nile, and even that river itself directed towards the east, instead of flowing northwards, as at present. This, however, would require prodigious labor, and the profit arising from it would never compensate for the expence. Besides, the Ethiopians would gain nothing by ruining Egypt; and if their object was only to have a communication with the Arabian gulph, it might be effected by repairing the canal formerly opened by the Egyptian deserters. That cut must now be entirely dry, because it is not marked down by Niebuhr, and the position on d'Anville's map is altogether ideal.

Ethiopia and Egypt seldom formed one dominion; but if these two countries were subject to one prince, he might succeed by means of dikes and sluices to raise the Nile annually to the exact height necessary for inundating the whole country from Syene to the Mediterranean. By collecting the rain-water swallowed up in the sands of Abyssinia, reservoirs might be formed for supplying Egypt at will. Something of the kind is, indeed, said to have been attempted by the ancients; because far in the interior of Africa some rivers are found communicating with each other by canals formed separately by human art; but no person can suppose that any such project was ever formed by the Egyptians, who, perhaps, never conceived it to be practicable. The priests knew nearly every thing to be acquired concerning
the

the causes of the overflowing of the Nile, which they explained in a very satisfactory manner to Eudoxus *. But, with regard to the source of that river, they either placed it too far towards the south; or supposed that, properly speaking, no such spot existed. This opinion, indeed, seems most probable; for in all appearance a number of small brooks are formed in different parts some days after the rain begins to fall in the torrid zone. The source of the river may, therefore, be found sometimes in one valley, and sometimes in another, accordingly as the wind drives the clouds, or as they are attracted to some particular mountain. Thus the Nile probably originates at certain periods in very distant provinces; but it cannot possibly proceed from the heights of the austral hemisphere, as the priests seem to have supposed. •

What has been said may suffice to give a tolerable idea of the internal government of ancient Egypt; but long discussions would be necessary to indicate the policy observed towards other nations. This conduct seems to have been little understood by the Egyptians in general, and we may cite as an example the unpardonable fault of *Amasis*, who neglected to form a secret treaty with the Arabs, when the power of Cyrus began to make Asia tremble. The ancients themselves have observed, that, if the Egyptians had adopted this precaution, the army of Cambyfes would never have penetrated even as far as the isthmus of Suez. Psammeticus was guilty of a

* Plutarch in Placitis Philosoph. lib. iv.

still

still more enormous imprudence in committing the defence of Egypt to foreign troops, and establishing colonies there composed of the dregs of different nations. The coast of the Mediterranean might have remained free to the commerce of Greece; but the Greeks themselves should never have been admitted as settlers in the cantons of the *Delta*. The Egyptians had already in their country too many foreign colonists, who were allowed to live in bodies according to their particular laws; and this is contrary to all rules of policy. One of these societies, composed solely of Phenicians, possessed a considerable part of Memphis; a band of Arabs were sedentary at Coptus; and the inroads of the Bedouins could not always be prevented, as we find by the contract established between them and the Egyptians, as well as by the great useless wall constructed by Sesostris. The Arabs of Coptus carried on a kind of traffic, and sent some wares as far as the town called *Arabia Felix*, which certainly was not a country, as the author of the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* has asserted in a very positive manner. Thus, when the Ptolemies opened a direct intercourse with India, Arabia Felix disappeared, and the place, where it formerly stood, was levelled entirely by the Romans. The Ethiopians had an establishment in higher Egypt; and the western Africans, who, in my opinion, composed the *detested tribe*, lived in hordes towards the *Racotis*, and on the spot where Alexandria was afterwards founded. The Jews were fixed in the neighbourhood of the little city of Hercules, which

we

we take to be *Auaris*; but some of the learned look for this town in Arabia Petrea, towards a place where many Egyptian monuments have been discovered*. We do not include the Babylonian settlement below Memphis, because it was not formed apparently until after the invasion of Cambyfes; and those, who were taken for Babylonians, seem rather to have been Persians, who had in that place the only Pyrea ever seen in Egypt. The ancients have besides mentioned a troop of fugitive Trojans, whom the Egyptians received likewise, and placed them near the great quarries to the eastward of the Nile; but the story of these pretended Trojans seems fabulous, and some other race of men were meant, whose history is too obscure to admit of elucidation.

Besides these strangers already mentioned, some Carians and Ionians were found in Egypt, who at first possessed some lands near the Pelusian branch of the Nile, abandoned most probably by the *Catastres* and *Hieracopites*. They were afterwards introduced to garrison the capital, where they remained constantly, until dispersed by Cambyfes. The Pharaohs

* They pretend that *Auaris* is the same town as Ptolemais. Stephanus, and the Catalogue of Bishopsrics, place it in Arabia, with the name of *Avara*, which is called *Avatha*; in the *Notice of the Empire*, printed at Basil in 1552, where the text is more correct than in any other. That opinion, however, is founded merely on the resemblance of the name; and a thousand examples prove that Josephus committed enormous faults relative to the geography of Egypt. In my idea he has confounded the Bubastic canal with the Tanitic mouth of the Nile; and this confusion has prevented *Auaris* from being found in *Sethron*.

had

had employed that body of militia in many expeditions; and it may be supposed they also took into pay the Phenicians who inhabited Memphis, when they undertook to form a navy. Nothing of the kind, however, was attempted previous to the reign of Psammetichus, who, according to some chronologists, did not ascend the throne until the year six hundred and seventy-three before our present era.

SECT. X.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHINESE.

AS the Scythians were at all times restless and enemies to peace, the first chiefs, chosen by the old men to conduct the hordes, led them easily from one military expedition to another. Constantly at war, they had continual occasion for caciques or captains, who afterwards became independent, and transmitted the sovereignty to their children, or appointed successors, without consulting the people. This is the reason why the Chinese were never seen proceeding in a body to elect an emperor, even when the imperial family in the male line became extinct; and to the same cause should be attributed the want of power in the legislature of China to regulate the order of succession in the reigning dynasty. Yet a more essential step could not have been taken to stop the first progress of that despotism, which continued to augment until the reign of *Schi-chuan-di*.

That prince dissipated the very shadow of the ancient feudal government, by uniting all the provinces under his immediate authority. Previous to this event, China was divided into a great number of petty states, some of which had very wise regulations; and many of their laws were afterwards new-modelled, and incorporated in the general constitution of the empire. Among the independent sovereigns, some were found truly respectable, who loved and practised
virtue:

virtue: they thought no people more worthy of their protection than men of learning, who, finding it there impossible to distinguish themselves in real science, endeavoured to shine in works of morality, which depended less on acquired knowledge. Confucius in this manner obtained great reputation in the little kingdom of *Lon*, where he became prime minister. If born again at the present day, he would not perhaps be able to attain the rank of a mandarin of the ninth class; for the elevation of a man becomes more the effect of chance in proportion as despotism increases. If China had not been divided into so many different states, it would never have become what it now is. The emperors, who succeeded *Schi-chuan-di*, entrusted the first dignities and the government of the provinces almost entirely to eunuchs, incapable of conceiving or executing any great project. They must probably have still continued in those employments, had not the Tartars expelled them, after having taken advantage of their treason to invade the empire: every thing was in such disorder, that formidable bands of robbers pillaged the provinces; and *Pe-kin* could not resist their attacks, although defended by a garrison of sixty thousand men. Yet the Moguls found the distresses of that country still greater in the thirteenth century, when *Koublai Kan* employed the greatest zeal to restore tranquillity and good order. He not only repaired the towns which the Chinese had so ill defended against the generals of *Gengis Kan*, but he likewise built many others, besides *Pe-kin*, where he fixed the seat of empire, from political motives suffi-

ciently justified by events. That prince, indeed, had a Chinese preceptor from his earliest years; but, having attained manhood, he saw clearly that, without the aid of foreign artists and scientific men, it was impossible to execute any useful project; and the Mandhuis made exactly the same observations.

China is more governed by police than by laws; and, unless an absolute authority were vested in the deputies of the sovereign, so vast a country could never be held under the subjection of one person. Yet, by means of absolute authority, the Tartars, who could scarcely read or write when they conquered China, have governed better there than the Chinese themselves, who had only their own country to regulate, while the Mandhuis have, besides, to maintain their sway in the two Tartaries.

The two chief springs of this government are the whip and the cudgel; and neither Chinese nor Tartar can be secure against this discipline. *The emperor, says Father du Halde, sometimes orders a few bastinadoes to persons of great rank and consequence, and afterwards treats them as if nothing had happened**. This is the conduct of all the despots of Asia without exception: their subjects may be ill used in a thousand different ways; but such slaves can never be dishonored, because that is contrary to the nature of things.

Whenever a general makes his appearance, all the soldiers fall on their knees, either in the camp or on the parade; and men of that disposition can never be

* Description of China, vol. ii.

robbed

robbed of their honor. Yet the Chinese imagine, that their form of government was modelled on paternal authority; but they could never have harboured this idea, if their moralists had been able to determine how far paternal authority should extend. Those, who were accustomed to despotism in each family, could not be surprised to find it in the state; and the princes took advantage of this disposition to introduce a servile submission, very different from political subordination. Thus the secret of government consists chiefly in promoting a false morality, and refraining from whatever might tend to limit the power of fathers over their children. In Persia and Turkey, no parent can sell his son, because such bargains are declared illegal; and if recourse were had there to the Justinian code, which is faithfully translated into Arabic, to sanction this abuse, the cadis would then judge according to the canonical law; for they only employ the Roman procedure in cases where the texts and glossaries of the Koran are indecisive. In China, on the contrary, the validity of such contracts has never been disputed, because they are known to be legal; and the magistrates would exert the executive power to seize a child, who had taken refuge with his uncle, after being sold by his father.

Those people must be very ill informed, who maintain in Europe, that the political constitution of China is not despotic. They tell us in vain of judiciary tribunals being established there; for that is likewise the case in all the absolute states of Asia. It can never be supposed that one man could decide all the contests

arising in a country as extensive as the whole of Europe.

The governors of the smallest places have the right of *pent-se*; that is to say, they can beat all the citizens with impunity. All the *tsong-tau*, or viceroys, possess the power of life and death, without requiring to have decrees signed by the emperor, or inspected by any superior tribunal; and they frequently order immediate execution, without the smallest formality of justice. Their instructions point out a number of situations when immediate death may be inflicted on criminals*; and it is precisely from having specified certain cases that none are excepted. The *tsong-tou* can easily convict the dead of conspiracy, revolt, and treason, which admits of so much variety in China. The judges do not conduct their criminal proceedings according to the manner adopted in the most polished countries of Europe; otherwise, the acts of procedure would be sent to Pe-kin. But they send nothing more than the sentence, contained in three or four lines, like that of the missionaries who were strangled in the province of *Nan-kin*.

Under the Chinese government the emperors scarcely ever quitted their palace: when they did go out, a kind of *courrouc* was made, as in Persia, and any person who looked at them when passing incurred death. All the despots of the East shut themselves up in the same manner; and it would be impossible to describe the evils produced by this fatal custom in so

* "The emperor empowers the *tsong-tou*, and even the viceroy, to inflict instant death on criminals." Descript. of China.

many

many parts of Asia. The Chinese were the only people who endeavoured to find a remedy by sending visitors into the provinces to examine the conduct of the viceroys and *tsang-tou*. But, when those governors were eunuchs, it was necessary to wink at their exactions, because the emperor inherited their fortunes. This infamous custom disgusted the Tartars; and, disdaining to be the heirs of mutilated wretches, at the expence of the people, they appointed men to govern the provinces.

The emperors of the preceding dynasty had confiscated many landed possessions; and when united to their domain, they were left uncultivated. Those estates became so very extensive, that the Tartars did not deprive the Chinese of a single foot of land at the conquest; for they found a sufficiency to make a decent establishment for each of their soldiers in the different appendages. Their troops, ranged under eight banners, amounted altogether to about seventy-five or eighty thousand men, exclusive of women, children, and Mandhuis, who came from Tartary, when the conquest was effected, and received lands like the rest.

The name of tribunal is very improperly given, in some relations, to certain offices at Pe-kin, established for the superintending of the particular affairs of the prince. The pretended tribunal of buildings is merely for the inspection of the furniture of the palace, the manufactures possessed immediately by the emperor, and whatever works he may be desirous of having constructed. Such institutions are found in

all the absolute states of Asia, and they are called defters, or chambers, at Constantinople and Ispahan.

The tribunal of mathematics never had that name, except in the relations of the Jesuits. It was a college under the Chinese government, appointed not only to compose almanacs, but to determine, according to certain principles of judicial astrology, the days when the sovereign could devote himself to different affairs. The precise time was also superstitiously fixed for the ceremony of his ploughing, according to the institution of *Ven-ti*. Thus we see nearly the same etiquette observed at the court of China as in Persia, where the pensioned astrologers regulated the actions of the emperor, with this difference, that the time for him to eat with the laborers, clothed like a peasant, was determined by the magi, and not by the astrologers.

The ancient Chinese gave the name of the sky, the earth, and the four seasons, to the six great colleges of the court. To that called autumn all criminal affairs are now addressed; and, therefore, it should be considered as a real tribunal, very different from the offices of superintendency.

Nothing in the whole jurisprudence of the Chinese is more shocking, than the custom borrowed from the Scythians, of punishing the relations of a criminal to the ninth degree, although their innocence was notorious. The husband, in the first place, is responsible for the actions of his wife and children. At the death of the father, the eldest son must answer for the conduct of his younger brothers: and they are all alike dragged to punishment, and involved in the same disgrace,

grace, while their sisters are reduced to slavery without mercy.

On my first arrival at Pe-kin, says Father Amiot, that rigor appeared to me extreme; but when I observed afterwards, continues he, that the Chinese cannot be induced to act unless from fear or interest, I began to consider this severity as reasonable and necessary*. But the difference is very great between speaking according to the principles of a despotic government, and those of equity and natural right, concerning which Father Amiot was very indifferent; because he belonged to a society where obedience had too much degenerated into a blind submission.

Innocence should in no case be punished from any motive whatever; and to allege necessity, instead of justice, is renewing an ancient maxim of tyranny, which has made mankind shudder in all the states of Europe. What is necessary for the despot may not be so for the people. That servile fear, which directs the actions of the Chinese, is a consequence of their institutions; and who indeed could refrain from trembling in a country where innocence itself is not in safety?

The emperor *Ven-ti* proposed to abrogate the law which punishes a whole family for the particular fault of one of its members. On this he was told, If you wish to reign over men, annul this institution; but it is necessary to keep your subjects in slavery:—and this fatal maxim, consequently, has been preserved unimpaired till the present moment.

* Chinese Art of War.

Ancient philosophers pretended, that, according to rigid right, the descendants of a criminal, justly punished, should not be involved in his disgrace. Plato admits only one case as an exception to the general rule. When the great-grandfather, the grandfather, and the father of a man, says he, have suffered death, after being successively convicted of a great crime; that person, he adds, should be considered as infamous, and incapable of exercising any employ in the republic; because the race was evidently perverse, when it could not be corrected by three successive punishments and the lapse of four generations. We might be led to speak more seriously of this case imagined by Plato, were it not so extraordinary, that, perhaps, no example of the kind has ever occurred since the origin of political societies.

If it was an injustice, according to the opinion of philosophers, to mark those with infamy who were not culpable, we may conceive the barbarity or atrocity of putting them to death. When a whole Chinese family became extinct under the hands of the executioner, the emperor confiscated their possessions; and the persons of the females related to the real or supposed criminals were sold for his particular profit. Nearly the same custom was observed among the Scythians mentioned by Herodotus; but all my researches have not been able to ascertain, whether or not it had likewise been adopted by the independent sovereigns of China, who succeeded the petty kans. The continual wars of the latter prevented them from improving the laws, and regulating the state, like the inde-

independent sovereigns ; and Confucius, if all we have heard concerning him be true, would not, in all probability, have allowed a whole family of the kingdom of *Lon* to be condemned for the fault of an individual.

No nation of Asia ever exercised a torture comparable to that of the Chinese, who tear the skin and flesh in stripes from the body of the accused, until he confesses a crime of which, perhaps, he is innocent. As different kinds of mutilations were formerly practised in China, some judges represented to the emperor *Ven-ti*, that those who had their legs amputated below the inflexion of the knee frequently perished in the operation, and even the survivors suffered more than death. That prince, who merited praise, had he not been silly enough to swallow the drink of immortality, abolished all kinds of disfigurements by an edict, which remained in force, like the greater part issued there, during the life of the framer. Afterwards, it became customary to imprint black characters on the face, as well as to cut off the nose ; and to this the Chinese owe their expertness in making artificial noses, and applying them so as to create a perfect deception. Such stigmas are easily effaced entirely, although inflicted with a burning iron, or by pricking the epiderm. It is not from being in pain about their honor, that the thieves are anxious to make these marks disappear ; but because they render the practice of their villany more difficult. In other places, says Father Trigault, garrisons are placed in towns to defend them against foreign enemies ; in China, they are

are intended to protect the towns from robbers. All travellers, however, confess that the danger is still greater by day than during the night. The Tartars endeavour as much as possible to observe a severe discipline; and a single Mandhui conducts a thousand Chinese with a whip, in the same manner that a janissary governs as many Greeks with a cudgel.

Mr. Porter, who has bestowed so much praise on the police of the Turks *, should have perceived that the same apparent order is obvious in all the cities of despotic states; and it diminishes in proportion to the distance from the towns. Little security can be found in the country, unless immediately under the protection of some of the members of the police; who, in arbitrary states, are always soldiers; because the prince has no other support.

Mr. Salmon assures us, that, according to the documents employed by him in composing his History, not less than fifteen thousand persons are almost constantly confined in the prisons of Canton †. But the criminals should be distinguished in this calculation from those who are shut up only for a few days.

When the emperor *Schi-chuan-di* united all the provinces under his immediate control, he forbade the use of arms among the Chinese, and would not even allow them to possess an arrow or a dart. This maxim encouraged the attempts of robbers, who were sure of finding the inhabitants of the country altogether defenceless. It occasioned also many other regulations

* Observations on the Religion and Laws of the Turks.

† Present State of China, vol. i.

relative

relative to cases where blood was shed ; because, from such appearances, the legislator inferred the use of some offensive weapon. When the Chinese fight among themselves, each avoids carefully either tearing the clothes or piercing the skin of his antagonist. The murderer is punished with death ; but he has always to languish a considerable time in prison : for, except those cases where the *tsong-tou* and viceroys find it convenient to act irregularly, all sentences of death must be signed by the emperor. Some consider this formality as peculiar to China ; but it is practised in all the despotic states of Asia, and principally in Persia, as we learn from Chardin *. This custom is connected with the constitution of an absolute government, where the laws have no power without the will of the prince, who, besides, considers his subjects as a property ; and it is contrary to the essence of servitude, that a master should be deprived of a slave without his consent.

Religious rites have had a very great influence, as we may well suppose, on the civil law of the Chinese. The sacrifices offered to the manes of their deceased ancestors do not permit that a father should leave his whole possessions to an only daughter : it is an axiom, that a woman cannot sacrifice ; and, therefore, the testator must provide some other person to perform the ceremony. Female children can never inherit any

* “ In Persia, the king alone can give sentence of death ; and when the *divan-bequi* at the court, or the magistrates of the provinces, find a man meriting death, information is given to the king, who decides the fate of the criminal.” Description of the Persian Government, chap. xvii.

thing

thing when they have brothers ; for the law divides all property equally among the males, charging them with nothing more than the maintenance of their sisters until they marry ; and then no dowry is ever paid. Women are particularly ill treated in China by the legislator, who has taken less pains to provide for their subsistence than to insure their slavery.

Different kinds of servitude are seen among the Chinese, exclusive of what results from polygamy. As the Tartars were the immediate slaves of their kan, previous to the conquest of China, they continue exactly in the same state at present. This does not proceed, as might be imagined, from any obligations imposed upon them by the idea of their holding lands through the liberality of the prince. They can sell such possessions to one another, and no longer retain any right to the alienated lands, unless the transfer has been made to the Chinese, who are obliged, on receiving back the purchase-money, to make restitution of the landed property, which would otherwise be gradually withdrawn entirely from the conquerors. The conduct of the Tartars in China is altogether extraordinary : they have effected, through prudence, what the greatest politicians would scarcely have dared to attempt by artifice and cunning. When Alexander forced the Macedonians to assume the garb of the Persians, he proceeded ignorantly, but not so absurdly as the Moguls, who preserved their own dress, and allowed that of the conquered to remain also. Thus one Tartar was known among a thousand Chinese. The Mandhuais alone acted properly.

Some

Some are slaves in China from their birth ; while others, who were originally free, have been sold either with their own consent, or by force ; and their descendants remain in bondage. Liberty is so lightly treated, that a man can sell himself there at the present day. The Chinese are ignorant of that species of slavery known in Greece and Egypt, where one whole nation is condemned to serve another ; and which may be called Helotism. Yet this fate might have attended the Moguls, had they been subjugated instead of being expelled ; but, from causes difficult to be explained, they are again very powerful in China, and they increase daily, as well as the Mahometans. The latter have among them a species of slavery less shocking to natural right than all others : they rear some of the children exposed on dunghills by the Chinese, and subject them, when grown up, to a very easy yoke.

Confiscation occasions numberless evils in China. It is however little known among the peasants, who are as remarkable for their virtues, as the populace of the towns are for their vices. They cannot be reproached either with bad faith, roguery, infanticide, or debauchery ; for nothing equals their discretion, sobriety, and laboriousness. But they are crushed by continual statute-work, which is exacted with great rigor in China, as well as throughout the whole of Asia.

An edict of the emperor *Suen-ti* exempts for some time from public works those who have lost their father or mother ; for these unfortunate people, says he,

he, should be allowed to reimburse themselves for the expences of this burial. This was indeed a trifling remedy for a very great evil. As the greater part of the Chinese peasants have neither oxen nor horses, they cultivate with their hands alone the portions of land they rent from the great proprietors*. To labor for the sovereign is ruinous to those people for two reasons: they lose, as the emperor *Suen-ti* observes, a great deal of precious time, and their strength is exhausted by being forced to supply the place of cattle. I observed, says Nieuhof, when passing from Canton to Pe-kin, that the Chinese peasants were frequently forced by stripes to draw the vessel which conveyed the Dutch ambassador, although he begged the conductors to show more moderation. This is the situation of those people, who form the most respectable part of the empire; and it is a melancholy circumstance that their habitations, when far distant from towns, cannot be protected against thieves and vagabonds.

On advancing towards the centre of the provinces, fewer appearances of labor are seen, and the villages diminish in number. Thus, not nearly one-half of the soil in the whole empire is cultivated; particularly if we include the prodigious cantons of those savages called *Mia-ssé*. Yet agriculture cannot be considered as brought to great perfection in any country, until the arable are in proportion to all the barren lands as fifty to three; and we are told that this has been effected in England.

* Eckerberg. Bericht von der Chinesischen Landwirthschaft.

All the provinces of China must not be judged by those of *Che-kan* and *Nan-kin*, the soil of which is considered as formerly belonging to the sea, or an inundation of the Yellow River. The chief mouth of that river is said to have been anciently in the gulph of *Pe-tcheli*, five degrees more towards the north than at this day. Father Gaubil, in his History of the Moguls, speaks very fully of this change, without being willing to admit that the emperor *Tu* could never have conducted the Yellow River like a brook, and that too at a period two thousand two hundred years before our era. But, in fact, the whole account given in the *Chou-King* is grossly fabulous. When we consider the map, it would seem indeed that the extreme irregularity in the course of that river had proceeded from dikes constructed for the purpose. If the Chinese do not take more efficacious measures than they have hitherto adopted, the Yellow River must again occasion many embarrassments, for its windings are too considerable; and, if it really fell originally into the gulph of *Pe-tcheli*, it may well be expected to resume that direction.

As the Chinese have a strong propensity, or rather an ardent passion, for commerce, the emperor *Ven-ti* endeavoured to give some consequence to the profession of husbandmen, that they might be preserved from that spirit of traffic and roguery, which, like a growing contagion, infected the nation ever since the government became despotic under *Schi-chuan-di*. But the ceremony of the emperor tilling the earth, as many

monarchs of India had done before, could not compensate for arbitrary imposition and continual statutory labors. Let agriculture be freed from the shackles of tyranny; and then, instead of requiring recompences or honors, its own force will be sufficient to ensure an ample reward.

What has most contributed to retain the Chinese peasants in the country, is the consciousness that their vexations are not equal to those of the merchants: but the latter always steer against the stream, instead of being discouraged by obstacles. They resemble the Jews, who inhabit the different states of Asia: their continual grievances goad them on; and they pursue traffic, because it enables them to purchase protection at court. The great injustice they experience is in some measure repaired by the opportunities they are allowed of making illicit gain; and, to explain this, we shall quote a passage of the Journal of Mr. de Lange, agent at Pe-kin for the court of Petersburg. *The gentry in China, says he, defraud the merchants, and take away their wares under every kind of pretext, without their ever being able to obtain payment. On that account, the traders and others who exercise lucrative professions at Pe-kin, are accustomed to chuse protectors among the princes of the blood and other great lords or ministers of the court, to whom they pay annually a certain proportion of their gain. By this expedient they are insured against the extortions of mandarins, and even of private soldiers. Without powerful protection a merchant is a ruined man in China, and particularly at Pe-kin,*
where

where every person thinks he has an incontestable right to form pretensions on those who live by traffic. If any man is rash enough to require an equitable reparation by the way of public justice, he falls from bad to worse. The mandarins, after having drawn from him as much money as possible, do not fail indeed to order the effects taken unjustly to be brought to the college; but he must be still more knowing to have them taken thence.

From the combination of these causes, and many others, it results, that the number of merchants even moderately rich is not very great, considering the quantity of shops and the multitude of pedlars who crowd together in the principal towns of the empire, or frequent the fairs. The exterior commerce is not supposed to amount to more annually than five million ounces of silver; and the ounce of that metal at Pe-kin is now equal to about six shillings and three-pence.

Several writers have spoken of the revenues of the emperor of China, but in a manner so very vague, that nothing satisfactory can be deduced from it. Mr. Salmon does not believe that the whole imperial income amounts to more annually than twenty-two millions of pounds sterling. The real receipt in silver most probably does not exceed two-thirds of that sum; for we do not speak here of what is paid in kind, although it may admit of being estimated with some exactness: but no person can calculate the value of confiscations, which are of infinite importance to avaricious princes.

It should be observed, that, in all despotic states, the revenues of the sovereigns are much less than we are tempted to believe, considering the great extent of their dominions. The sultan did not receive annually four millions of pounds sterling from all the countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa; which were under his sway before the last war. The revenues of the great Mogul have been greatly exaggerated; for they do not in reality exceed one hundred and eighty-five millions of *scuta*, or somewhat less than twenty-three millions sterling.

Under the Chinese government the eunuchs had introduced so much disorder into the finances of the empire, that it has hitherto been impossible to clear up the chaos. The Tartars found the greater part of the provinces indebted so largely to the treasury, that the debt could never be paid, and it was no longer required. The eunuchs dreamed of nothing but imposts, until they wanted means to levy them; and, when the people complained of a tax on salt, it was commuted for another on iron. Some of their dreadful depredations are detailed by a Chinese author, called *Chi-kiai*, whose expressions we have preserved on account of their energy.

“ Under the present dynasty,” says he, “ we hear
 “ of nothing but imposts, duties, and prohibitions.
 “ This is excessive. They are levied on the moun-
 “ tains, and on the vallies; on the rivers, and on the
 “ seas; on salt and on iron; on wine and on tea; on
 “ linens and on silks; on passages and on markets;
 “ on

“ on brooks and on bridges: on all these, and on
 “ many other things, I see every-where the prohibi-
 “ tory mark *.”

The emperor did not receive the thousandth part of these exactions, which were farmed out by the eunuchs to men who gave them the greater part of the profits. To palliate the deficiency of the receipt, they declared the provinces indebted for great sums, although they proceeded from impositions added to the ordinary tribute. This artifice appeared execrable to the Tartars, who had not yet, says Father Amiot, lost their natural probity: and they reformed the salt-works and custom-houses, except that of Canton, which, in Asia, is as odious as those of Spain and Portugal are in Europe.

Besides all these, another excessive abuse existed until it was remedied by the emperor *Can-hi*. In republics and moderate governments, those who rent lands in order to profit by them, might be charged with the taxes; but, in despotic states, they must be required from the proprietors, otherwise the tenants are liable to be harassed both by the landlord and the sovereign. This was exactly the case in China at the arrival of the Tartars, who ordered that, in future, none but the real owners of estates should be responsible for the taxes.

The greater part of the revenues of the emperor of China consist in rice, wheat, raw and wrought silk, hay, straw, tobacco, tea, and brandy. They are,

* Collection of Imperial Edicts and Remonstrances, &c. translated from the Chinese by Father Hervieu.

therefore, under the necessity of paying their officers in the same way; and, as those articles cannot be sold without loss, numberless misdemeanours are the consequence. Money is always very rare wherever the sovereigns do not receive imposts in specie. This scarcity irritates avarice on the one hand, while, on the other, slavery fomented luxury. People wish to appear great in proportion as their real consequence is diminished; and therefore, when almost annihilated by arbitrary power, the Chinese cannot dispense with embroidered clothes.

In a country of slavery a poll-tax is so natural, that the Chinese, who have murmured against all others, have supported that impost patiently. But the extracts of their registers of capitation, such as they have appeared in Europe, are altogether false, as we have proved in the second article of this work. We shall not repeat here what has been said concerning the population of that country; but it certainly does not amount to eighty millions of souls. The Tartars found only eleven million fifty-two thousand eight hundred and twelve families, which multiplied by five, would not make sixty millions. Considering the prodigious extent of China, it is much more thinly inhabited than Germany; and it would be still less populous but for the favorable climate of the southern provinces, which, according to the missionaries, are far better peopled than those of the north.

As the political institutions of that empire have not the smallest analogy with the government of ancient Egypt, neither sacerdotal nor military families were
ever

ever seen there. The Chinese soldiers, contrary to the regulations of the *Calasires* and *Hermotybes*, carry on commerce, exercise trades, and cultivate lands, as was customary at all times, even before portions were assigned to the eight banners of the Mandhuis. If we are to believe Father Amiot, the pay of each foot soldier costs the emperor *Kien-long* twenty-five shillings every month, of which one half is paid in money, and the other in rice; while that of a horseman is thirty-seven shillings and sixpence, paid in the same manner with the former*.

In general, the maintenance of troops costs more in despotic states than elsewhere; but it is not probable that all the Chinese forces, which may be divided into five classes, are on the same footing. The first comprehends the cavalry: they have no fire-arms of any kind; because the Tartars, who perhaps understand this part of tactics better than any other, are convinced that bows are much preferable to musketoons; and they continue, like all the Parthians and Scythians, to shoot arrows when in full gallop. The second division is composed of cannoniers and arquebusiers: the third of pike-men: the fourth of infantry, who use bows: and, last of all, those who are armed with swords and bucklers.

The exercise of all these troops, so very differently armed, resembles a theatrical play in the colored prints at the end of the work entitled *Art Militaire des Chinois*. The most ludicrous of all their farces is

Chinese Art of War, p. 30.

x 4

per-

performed by the infantry, who conceal themselves behind bucklers, which are placed in such a manner as to resemble a flower, called by the Chinese *mei-hoa*; and, for this purpose, five men are obliged to lie upon each other horizontally. These buffoons afterwards counterfeit those Scythian dragons, called *lu*, or *loug*, with which their colors are covered; and then they become tygers, springing from under their shields as from a thicket to seize their prey. But their grand manœuvre is to imitate *the projection of the moon, which serves as a buckler to the mountains*, or, as the Chinese express themselves, *yen yue pai-chan tchen* *. In a general evolution, where the five bodies of militia are employed, a representation is given of the four corners of the earth, which they believe to be square, and of the rotundity of the sky. This is practised by mixing the cavalry with the infantry, in such a manner that it is almost impossible to form any distinct idea of it. Father Amiot himself seems to have been very ignorant of the matter; for, to all appearance, the prints sent by him from Pe-kin to Paris, represent only imaginary manœuvres, or military amusements, and, at all events, they did not deserve to be engraved.

We have not been able to ascertain how many troops the Tartars continue to keep on foot since the conquest; but they cannot be very numerous, if we

* Chinese Art of War, p. 348.—From the dragons on the Scythian standards, seems to have been derived the word Dragoon; signifying a soldier who serves either on foot or on horse; and Alexander is said to have adopted that term after the Persians.

believe

believe the emperor *Kien-long*, who pretended that one Mandhui could easily subdue ten men : let it be understood, however, that they must be Chinese, particularly when concealed under their shields to imitate the flower *mei-hoa*, or the *projection of the moon*.

The emperor *Kien-long* could not be ignorant, that the conquest of China by his ancestors was owing in a great measure to the almost incredible disorder into which the eunuchs had plunged that country, as well as to the wretched state of the Chinese militia. Father Trigault, who saw those troops previous to the entry of the Tartars into Pe-kin, declares, that such a collection of vile wretches had not been seen for many ages in Asia. They consisted in great part of slaves belonging to the emperor as well as to private people, and all equally capable of the most infamous functions. They, or their fathers, had been sold and reduced into slavery for different crimes ; and, although called soldiers, they were nothing more than banditti*.

The magistrates of China are divided into nine orders ; and this institution seems to be founded entirely on the superstitious infatuation of the Chinese for the number nine. Some of our authors speak with admiration of those prodigious examinations undergone by candidates, previous to their being admitted to the office of mandarin. The origin of this

* *Nulla gens æquè vilis atque iners est quam militaris apud Sinas. . . Maxima pars regia sunt municipia vel propriis, vel majorum suorum sceleribus perpetuam ferventis servitutem. Idem quo tempore a bellicis exercitationibus vacant infima quæque officia, bajulorum, muliorum, et inhoneftiora, etiam servitia exercent.* Exped. apud Sinas, p. 100.

custom

custom is easily conceived, when we reflect upon the nature of the Chinese characters. In Europe, it is easy to be convinced in half an hour whether or not a person can read and write. But in China, on the contrary, this requires a long scrutiny; for a man of letters, who should have made himself acquainted with ten thousand characters, does not perhaps know more than three thousand. Many proofs are therefore necessary to determine the real extent of his learning, and how far he can compose in writing, which, if done with perspicuity, is so very difficult, that few of the literati are capable of effecting it, as we learn from the missionaries. The lowest class of merchants at Canton have generally a small provision of characters by heart, sufficient for their mercantile affairs; and, beyond that, they neither know how to read nor write. Thus it became necessary to institute those long examinations in China, which are common in all the other despotic states of Asia. In Turkey the cadis and imans are not admitted, without having undergone some proofs; but money can render the Turks and Chinese much more learned than all their studies. It is published even on the theatres of China, says Mr. Torrens, that the places under government are all venal, as well as the office of mandarin*. Besides, the want of public schools is a great obstacle to the elevation of those who are born without some fortune, and whose parents have not the means of paying a private tutor.

* Reise nach China.

That

That class of men, who require most to be strictly examined in China, are subject to no such formality. We speak here of the medical profession, which is open to every person without any obligation to study the art of healing. The first relations, says Morhoff, published by the missionaries in Europe, gave high ideas of the Chinese physicians; but when the work of Cleyer appeared, continues he, the enthusiasm ceased, and their admirers have been covered with ridicule*. Not one Chinese has any knowledge either of the internal parts or anatomy of the human body. The work of Dionis has indeed been published in the Tartar language; but all the missionaries together could not have translated it into Chinese; and that book, so little esteemed in Europe, is certainly not sufficient to form an anatomist. All the real sciences have been neglected beyond belief among the Chinese; and their conduct towards physicians was entirely opposite to that of the Egyptians, who were accused in this point of extreme severity. Some Greeks pretend, that they inflicted death on those who swerved from the rules prescribed in the Hermetic books for the treatment of patients. We have already observed, that, in epidemical disorders proceeding always from the same cause, and accompanied invariably with similar symptoms, the Egyptians were

* *Cleyerus nuper nobis revelavit medica Chinesium mysteria, quæ ubi in lucem protracta sunt, risum potius, quam applausum merentur; ac merito pudorem illis incutiant, qui Europæ medicina obicere non sunt veriti perfectionem medicina Chinesis.* Morh. Polihist. lib. i.

right in adopting fixed medical rules. Every sick person would certainly prefer being arbitrarily treated by a skilful doctor to all formularies whatever: but, when practitioners are ignorant, it is some comfort to have their prescriptions confined to a particular form. We speak however of the Egyptian regulations on this point, without being able to ascertain any thing; because they are not sufficiently known. It is believed, from passages in Isocrates and some other ancient authors, that the physicians in Egypt were not allowed to employ any medicines more violent than those contained in their pharmacopeia. But the punishment of death was most probably confined to oculists, dentists, and surgeons, who had taken upon themselves to administer drugs improperly, beyond the bounds of their art. The Egyptians had very severe laws against murder; and the crime appeared to them nearly the same, whether a poor wretch was assassinated in his bed or on the high-way.

No lawyers are found among those men called the *literati* of China; because the parties have to appear before the judge, as in Turkey, and throughout the whole of the East. Some have pretended that their knowledge in the practice of the civil law was very extensive: but, in fact, they are totally ignorant of the matter, as may be demonstrated even from the testimony of the missionaries, who have most exalted the qualifications of the Asiatics. No appeal can be made there from any sentence whatever. This is no less opposite to the principles of civil law, than conformable to the institutions of a despotic state.

“ However

“ However the law may restrain a Chinese magistrate in criminal cases,” says Father du Halde, “ he is almost absolute in civil matters. All contests relative to the property of private persons are judged by the great officers of the provinces without any appeal ; although, in affairs of consequence, complaints may be lodged before the sovereign court at Pe-kin *.”

People are allowed likewise to complain even at Tunis and Morocco ; but no appeals are admitted there in civil procedures, which are more subject to injustice than all others. It is seldom that a judge can be led to act partially in criminal causes, which tend to disturb public tranquillity ; but he may be corrupted in different modes, when an action concerns only private interests. The prohibition of appeals is the more unpardonable when the rules of jurisprudence are neglected in the procedures ; and, to prove that this is the case in China, we have only to extract a passage from the work of Father du Halde.

“ Although the governor of the province,” says he, “ has under him the four great officers, and each mandarin is provided always with one or sometimes two assessors ; yet the affairs are not ordinarily decided by a plurality of votes. When the parties are brought before the tribunal, or *yamen*, of any magistrate of whatever rank, after some few formalities observed by the registers, bailiffs, and other such people, he pronounces according to his own will ; and sometimes orders the person, who has lost his suit, to receive a number of bastinadoes.”

* Description of China, vol. i.

This

This is exactly the method of the Turks, without the smallest difference. More causes are judged and decided there in an hour, than the tribunal of thirty at Thebes could have investigated in a month. The detestable custom of pronouncing without collecting votes, and of beating the pleaders afterwards, could never have been introduced or maintained but in states completely despotic. Slaves are governed by the cudgel, and men by the law.

The pride of the Chinese proceeds from their ignorance and their servitude: for other nations of Asia, not more free, are no less puffed up with ideas of their own consequence. Their adherence to ancient rites is the effect of education; and their attachment to their native country is produced by the worship rendered to ancestors, near whose tombs it is necessary to remain. Patriotism cannot exist in an empire so extensive as China. When some people of former times possessed no other domains than a town and a few fields round the ramparts, the love of their country was extreme; because they knew each other, and their common possessions. But a Chinese, born at Pe-kin, does not understand the language of a native of Canton; and how can such people consider themselves as countrymen? This diversity of dialects can be useful to the despot alone, by preventing the provinces from conspiring together suddenly; and China, for the same reason, has no posts for conveying private letters. Correspondence in that way would be too alarming for the government; and it appears by different relations, that the emperor is frequently under
the

the necessity of employing soldiers to escort his own couriers.

Thus China discovers nothing in point of legislation more wonderful than the other empires of the East. They subsist, because it would be surprising indeed that a usurper should not be found whenever a sovereign is wanting. Persia has been an empire from the days of Cyrus to those of *Kerim-kan*; and nothing but some physical revolution, not to be expected, can prevent it from continuing such for many ages longer.

No sooner is one Chinese dynasty hurled from the throne, than some person presents himself for the succession. The people have not time to reflect: The provinces are ignorant of the event, though the man is already in possession of the sovereign powers. Frequently the subjects neither know who the person is, nor whence he came; and they learn all these circumstances only when his power is established. China has had a shoemaker at one time, and the cook of a convent at another, for its emperors; and no country, except India, during the dynasty of the Moguls, ever saw so many sovereigns dethroned, slaughtered, and poisoned, without reckoning the one who hung himself at the arrival of the Tartars.

Many dreadful misfortunes would have been avoided in that country, had the order of succession been regulated among the descendants of the emperor: but the thing is absolutely impossible, because the sovereign there will not admit of any curb. The Mandhuys have no better political institutions on that head than the Chinese. The emperor *Can-hi* amused himself

himself with the fate of his children. When poisoned, the Chinese Gazette announced them dead of an apoplexy; and by the intrigues of the seraglio, hitherto not fully revealed, *Tong tcheng* came to the throne; although all the astrologers of the empire would have laid wagers to the contrary. The history of despotic empires can never be written in a manner either instructive or satisfactory. Great events are there decided by causes, which could not be related without shame, even when well attested. The Chinese are foolish enough to believe that anciently the wife of one of the emperors was employed in writing the transactions of the seraglio, to communicate them to the annalists of the empire. No person, however, has seen a single leaf of those memoirs, which would have merited no more belief than the Court Gazettes. The emperors, says Father Amiot, frequently receive compliments from the great colleges on the victories which these gazettes announce; while the flattered princes know beyond a doubt that their troops have been entirely defeated. Of this however the people and the great colleges are ignorant; for both officers and soldiers are forbidden, under pain of death, to give information of what passes. The general lies, and the army is silent.

THIS work was undertaken to show that no two nations ever resembled each other less than the Egyptians and Chinese; and as that object is now, in my opinion, fully accomplished, it would be superfluous to proceed any further in our researches.

THE END.

